

Escape the dry, cold winter to feel the warm and humid climates of three ancient "water towns".

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The only truly authentic Tibetan restaurant in the city offers tasty yak.

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BEIJING TODAY

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 29, 2002

NO. 81

CN11-0120

HTTP://BJTODAY.YNET.COM

Public service campaigns, like Jissbon's cool "condom man", are often used to skirt the condom ad ban.



Stretched Claims Spark Condom Suit

By Xiao Rong

A legal battle that opened last Friday between two of the best-known condom makers in China has stirred up unexpected media and public attention.

"The only global condom brand that can boast over 70 years of history is not Jissbon, but Durex, which our company has been authorized to produce and sell in China market," said Zhang Bin, public relations manager of Qingdao London International Latex Co.

Her company has charged Wuhan Jissbon Sanitary Product Corporation with making false claims and running plagiarized material on its website. Qingdao London International is demanding damages of up to five million yuan and a public apology in its lawsuit, being heard in the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate Court.

Zhang Wen Yao, vice manager of Wuhan Jissbon, dismissed the charges, saying, "Their suit is totally baseless and aimed simply at arousing public interest instead of really demanding compensation." That company has itself gained a reputation for finding enterprising ways to promote its prophylactics under the restrictions of a national ban on condom advertisements imposed since 1989.

Since Qingdao London International filed the suit in April, the case has been widely covered among domestic news media, including *Beijing Evening News*, *China Economic Times* and *Sina.com*. **False descriptions on the web** Zhang Bin told *Beijing Today* that Wuhan Jissbon has been running false information on its website since early this year, such as claims that Jissbon is the top condom brand worldwide, is Britain-based and has been around for over 70 years. She added the website also claimed the Jissbon brand has a 20 per-

cent share of the global market, and ranks No. 1 in sales in 40 countries and No. 2 in 23 countries.

"All of this information was plagiarized from Qingdao London International's website and promotional materials," she said. "The brand that really does hold a 22 percent share of the world market is 73-year-old Durex, which has been verified by AC Nielsen market research data."

Co-established in 1998 by Britain-based SSL International plc. and China's leading condom manufacturer, Qingdao Shuangdie Group, Qingdao London International Latex was the first joint venture in China to produce and sell condoms.

Zhang and her company have also accused Wuhan Jissbon of claiming that Jissbon-brand condoms ranked top in a spot-check of condom quality conducted by the State Quality Inspection Bureau. According to Dong Yongsan, lawyer for Qingdao London International, "It is stipulated that the results of national spot-checks cannot be used to promote products. Besides, the State Quality Inspection Bureau never ranks the enterprises it inspects."

Dong said that in the view of Qingdao London International, the false claims of Wuhan Jissbon constitute a breach of China's Anti-Malefeasance Law and the basic principle of honesty, and have led to significant financial losses for the plaintiff.

Back and forth

In confronting these charges, Wuhan Jissbon Co. has admitted that there was false information on its website, but said all such information has been removed from the site, a claim that *Beijing Today* has confirmed.

"The website was designed by an Internet company under our authorization, so it is that company that should be held responsible for any misconduct, according to our con-

tracts. Even if there was false information, only related government organizations, not a private company like Qingdao London International, can file these kinds of charges," said Zhang Wen Yao.

Dong Yongsan, however, replied that enterprises in the same industry have the right to file suit when their interests have been infringed upon, according to the national Anti-Malefeasance Law.

Zhang Wen Yao confessed that the problem was caused by negligence within his company. "But we never used the false claims on the website for any other promotions. Considering the few hits our website receives daily, how could our actions have resulted in big losses for Qingdao London International?" he added.

Dong Yongsan explained to *Beijing Today* that the 5 million yuan figure is based on Jissbon's publicity expenses of 5 million yuan and sales volume last year. He added that he has clear proof that Jissbon is not a British brand with over 70 years of history as the company's website claimed.

"The Jissbon brand was only registered in the UK in 1998 by a Chinese named Pan Ruijun. And British Jissbon International Co., the brand's supposed producer, does not exist. A Jissbon (UK) Global Company was just registered in the UK on July 3, after we filed our suit against them in

April," said Dong.

In response, Zhang Wen Yao said Wuhan Jissbon only acts as the general agent of Jissbon brand and is not quite clear about the holder of the Jissbon trademark in Britain.

Off-beat promoting

Zhang Wen Yao questioned Qingdao London International's motives in filing the suit because the company did not communicate with Wuhan Jissbon about the problem before filing its case.

"Their lawsuit and accumulating evidence against us reflects the intense competitions in domestic condom market," said Zhang Wen Yao.

Robin Price, general manager of Qingdao London International, responded in an email to *Beijing Today*, saying, "Jissbon's false claims about their products and company have created unfair competition in the marketplace." He added that in the past, Jissbon has run various advertising activities without full permission from State authorities, therefore making them in violation of the national ban.

In the past three years, Jissbon has acted as the daredevil in domestic condom industry with its public service campaign focusing on the promotion of condom use, and more obvious advertising tactics. As early as 1998, Jissbon put ads with the slogan "Love

without worry" on eighty buses in Guangzhou, the first condom advertisements ever in China. Just over one month later, the ads were taken down by local authorities because they were deemed illegal.

"If such advertising was legal, we would have done it a long time ago, since Durex started selling condoms in China in 1994. However, we always respect the laws of China and seek permission before going ahead with advertisements," said Robin Price.

He appealed for more openness for the advertising of condoms in China.

"On June 10 this year, the State Administration for Trade and Commerce put out a memo saying that they were considering opening up advertising for condoms," added Price. "This is good news, but so far there have been no further details on how they intend to do this."

Wuhan Jissbon has also expressed wishes for the opening of more channels for condom advertising. Zhang Wen Yao said that the ad ban has made it difficult for consumers to judge the quality of different condom brands, a situation that has forced companies to find alternate ways to promote their products.

"It's really unusual for a case like that between Jissbon and Durex to attract so much public and media attention. Condom manufacturers and agents should focus more on brand building instead of trying to sue their rivals," he added.

Despite the fact that the State Planning Commission calls for 1.2 billion condoms to be produced by seven designated domestic manufacturers each year, Robin Price confirmed that China is without doubt the fastest growing market in the world for Durex condoms.

"Chinese consumers now appreciate quality condoms and have real choices in what they buy," he said.



Jissbon's first ads stayed up a mere 33 days.

Photos by Photocome.com

Taking Drivers for a Ride

Agents of supposed UN-approved organization peddle useless international driver's licenses

By Xiao Rong

Some foreigners may think that driving in Beijing presents a challenge, but for Chinese driving abroad with new International Driving Document (IDD) identifications, sitting behind the wheel is actually illegal.

According to a report in *Shanghai Youth Daily* of November 15, domestic agents have been issuing these licenses under the so-called authority of the US-based International Automobile Driver's Corp. (IADC), which in turn insinuates it operates with the approval of the United Nations. These agents claim IDD holders of Chinese driver's licenses the right to drive in over 180 countries.

But it's all a complicated ruse.

The only international driver's license acknowledged worldwide and by the UN is the International Driving Permit (IDP), established under the UN's Convention on International Road Traffic of September 19, 1949. The IDP can only be issued by designated organizations empowered by the governments of contracted countries.

China, however, has not signed this convention, meaning that all international driver's licenses are invalid in this country and vice versa.

Therefore, the IDD is invalid as an actual driver's license for two reasons. First, New York-based IADC has not been approved by the US government to issue international driver's licenses. According to the official website of the US State Department, only the American Automobile Association and the American Automobile Touring Alliance have been legally authorized to distribute such licenses, in the form of IDPs, not IDDs.

Second, as China has not signed the UN convention, it therefore cannot authorize any organization to issue international driver's licenses. According to Mr. Zhao, who withheld his full name, from the press office of the Ministry of Public Security, all driver's licenses issued by agencies without the approval of government traffic authorities are illegal.

The US State Department's website also bears warnings that invalid IDPs are being sold over the Internet by unauthorized persons and companies for large sums of money, usually far greater than the charges of legally-operating entities.

Outside of the agency named in the *Shanghai Youth Daily* report, many other companies in Beijing, Guangzhou, Chengdu and other cities offer IDDs, which come in the form of passport sized booklets written in eight languages with validity periods of five years, for a price of 2,100 yuan.

Beijing Today contacted a Shanghai agent of IADC about the IDD. The director, Zhang Renjie, said that his company's general agent for issuing IDDs in the China region is Times Flyingsoft System, which is headquartered in Beijing.

An employee of Times Flyingsoft System who requested anonymity said the company has been authorized by New York-based IADC to issue IDDs to Chinese residents that hold domestic driver's licenses.

"The IDD is only a verified translation of a holder's original national driver's license according to the UN Convention on International Road Traffic. It can be used in all 186 countries that are part of that convention," he said.

He acknowledged that China has not signed the convention, making IDDs useless in this country, while adding that there have been no problems in other countries with the licenses issued by his company.

There are two IADC websites on the Internet, one belonging to the company that authorized Times Flyingsoft System to issue IDDs in China, and the other to the International Automobile Driver's Club, also a provider of IDD documents.

Neither website makes direct claims of being a UN-authorized organization, although both refer to the UN convention. They also both have special sections for the recruitment of international agents, who can earn money by selling IDDs.

"The UN has no power to authorize any other organization to issue the International Driving Permit (IDP)," said Liu Dunren, China Office director of the Canadian Tourism Bureau.

Liu himself possesses an authentic IDP issued by the Canadian Automobile Association, the only organization authorized by the Canadian government to issue the permit.

Unlike the IDD, the IDP is a light grey certificate valid for just one year. Liu said he spent just 15 Canadian dollars (\$9) for his permit.

EDITOR: LIU FENG DESIGNER: PANG LEI

Huge Water Transfer Project Approved

The Chinese government announced Monday it has approved in principle a plan to build the world's most massive water transfer project.

Addressing a press conference in Beijing Monday, vice-minister of water resources Zhang Jiayao called the South-North Cross-Country Water Transfer Project a strategic infrastructure under-

taken for China's sustainable development and a huge environmental endeavor.

He quoted Premier Zhu Rongji as once saying that the project is aimed at relieving the severe water shortage in north China, which will conserve water, tackle pollution and be environmentally friendly.

The project includes three

south-north canals in the eastern, central and western parts of the country, according to the vice-minister.

By 2050, it is expected to shift 44.8 billion cubic meters of water annually, with 14.8 billion cubic meters, 13 billion cubic meters and 17 billion cubic meters carried through the eastern, central and western canals

respectively.

In the first phase of the project, three sub-projects will include two sections of the eastern canal in Jiangsu and Shandong provinces, and the shoring-up of the Danjiangkou Reservoir in central China's Hubei Province, at the head of the central canal.

The central canal will draw

Yangtze River water up to Beijing by 2010, and the eastern canal will take Yangtze River water to Shandong Province by 2005.

The completion of the first-phase sub-projects are likely to improve the quality of drinking water in some northern areas, where underground water contains harmful pollutants.

(Xinhua)



Yuehaitie No.1, China's first transoceanic train ferry, arrived in the Qiongzhou Straits Sunday, where it will operate as a transportation link between railways in

Guangdong and Hainan provinces.

The ferry left Jiangnan Shipyard in Shanghai Thursday, traversing the Taiwan Straits en route to its des-

tination. The country's first transoceanic train ferry is scheduled to commence operation on December 28.

(Xinhua Photo)

Finnish President Awarded Honorary Doctorate

By Zhao Hongyi

Finnish President Tarja Halonen received an honorary doctorate from Chinese Academy of Forestry president Jiang Zehui at the academy's conference hall on November 27.

In her speech, Jiang Zehui said that President Halonen was awarded the honor in recognition of her great efforts in promoting cooperation in forestry industries of the two countries, particularly in forestry management, sustainable forestry development and eco-environmental protection.

The Finnish president paid a three-day state visit to China this week and held talks with Chinese leaders during her visit.



Photo by Zhao Hongyi

It was her first visit to China as president of Finland, and she is the first foreign president met by Hu Jintao since he assumed the role of general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party earlier this month.

Chinese Tigers to Go Wild

By Shan Jinliang

The south Chinese tiger will return to its natural habitat during the Beijing 2008 Olympics, if the Chinese Tiger Wild Releasing Project signed Tuesday proves a success.

The project is the result of a cooperation between Save China's Tigers, Chinese Tiger South Africa Trust and the Wildlife Research Center of the State Forestry Administration. Save China's Tigers is a UK and US-based non-governmental conservation organization established in 2000 by Beijinger Quan Li. Its main purpose is to rescue and protect Chinese tigers. Quan, who regards the Chinese tiger as the spirit of Chinese, hopes the tiger will be named mascot of the Beijing 2008 Olympics.

Since 1990, through the establishment of several nature reserves, China's State Forestry Administration has been leading efforts to save the Chinese tiger, the most endangered of tiger sub-species, and ancestor to all other tiger sub-species. Fewer than 30 Chinese tigers are left in the wild, while 60 survive in Chinese zoos.

The project calls for the establishment of a Chinese tiger conservation model. Through the creation of a pilot reserve in China, using South African reserve management expertise, indigenous Chinese wildlife will be reintroduced into the wild, with the Chinese Tiger as flagship. The reserve will also house other wildlife species, which could serve as a food source for the tigers.

Qu said the fate of the Chinese tigers will be reversed when the population of the colony of wild tigers reaches 100. An area of at least 150 to 200 square kilometers will be needed to support such a population. "It is not easy to acquire such a big area of land, so one of the difficulties would be enlisting support from local residents and the government," Quan told *Beijing Today*.

"Another difficulty would be the survival rate of the tigers," she added. Quan says some young tigers will be taken from zoos and taught to hunt and live independently. The second generation will be allowed to return to the wild after five to six years.

China, South Korea and Japan to Promote Asian Fashion

By Shan Jinliang

Fashion garments associations from China, South Korea and Japan signed a memorandum on November 22 to establish the Asia Fashion Federation. The federation is aimed at promoting exchanges, coordinating the inter-region garments trade and outward trade to Europe and America.

The federation, a non-governmental organization, is a regional cooperative organization, said Wang Qing, chairman

of the China Fashion Designers Association, "and it is to achieve free trade between the three countries in fashion garments, and hopes to give prominence to Asian fashion and expand garment trade to the outside world."

According to Wang, the federation will be formally established in Japan in July 2003. The first membership meeting will be held in South Korea in 2004 and the second in China in 2005.

Wang said European and American fashion has long been a favorite both for Japan, South Korea and China. However, the prospering of Asian economies has created an increased potential for fashion consumption and greater opportunities for fashion trade in the region. At the same time, fashion in Europe and America has stagnated somewhat, and is absorbing oriental fashion elements, providing opportunities for Asian fashion development.

Closer Touch Needed for Polish Business



Slawomir Wyszynski, director of Bursztyn, a jewelry manufacturer, shows a diamond ring to Chinese businessmen.

Photo by Su Wei

Today that within one hour, three Chinese enterprises had contacted him. "We would make a comparison among all the Chinese enterprises. We prefer that one company not interested in too wide variety of goods. Otherwise the packaging would be a problem for us."

Polish companies involved in the food and jewelry industries have proven the most attractive to Chinese businesses. Most of the interviewed Chinese business people agree that Polish products are much cheaper than those from other countries they cooperate with.

Thousands Compete for Olympics Jobs

By Hou Mingxin

Over 1,000 people took an examination in order to apply for 56 positions with the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG). This is the first open recruitment program by BOCOG. The examination included English, French and general knowledge tests.

"There are totally 3691 applicants, 42 percent of these applicants hold master's degrees and nine percent have studied abroad," said a spokesperson for BOCOG. "Some are key members of the national government, national enterprises and non-profit organizations, some are currently studying and working abroad, others are professors and scholars from renowned universities, still others are high-ranking executives in international companies."

According to the spokesman, after checking the applicants' qualifications, BOCOG selected 1080 applicants to sit the tests. Next month, the frontrunners will be offered interviews. The 56 successful applicants will start their new jobs in early January, 2003. Information about the application results and tests will be published online.

According to BOCOG, further recruiting programs will be held in the lead-up to the Olympic Games in 2008.

National Technology Plan Pushes Overseas Telecom Ties

By Yu Shanshan / Tony Shaw

Vice minister of science and technology Liu Yanhua says China will encourage foreign companies and research organizations to participate in selected telecom projects.

Plan 863, named for the date it was formally launched in March 1986, involves hundreds of specialists working on a variety of projects in the areas of biotechnology, information technology, aerospace, laser technology, automation, energy and new materials. The plan is part of a national strategic endeavor to bring the country's technology level up to the international level.

Liu made the announcement during the Future Wireless Telecommunications International Forum in Beijing last week. Wireless telecom has become one of the fastest growing sectors in China's economy, with an annual production value of over 200 billion yuan, close to that of the US market, which ranks No. 1 in the world.

Liu said Plan 863 has listed the research on future wireless telecom as a key step in the Tenth Five-year Plan (2001-2005).

Beijing to Hold WTO Forum

By Xiao Rong

On the eve of the one-year anniversary of China's entry into the World Trade Organization, the "2002 Beijing International Forum for China's WTO accession" will be held on December 17 and 18.

Sponsored by Beijing WTO Affairs Research and Consultation Center, the forum aims to discuss WTO related affairs and sum up the experiences and problems China has been facing since the accession into WTO.

The forum will focus on four special topics, namely Prospects of WTO and learning from global experiences, Local development experiences after WTO entry, International investment and competition and Legal service and anti-dumping.

"We sincerely hope the forum will prove to be a success preparing for the announcement of the 'Beijing Program for the Transitional Period of WTO Entry,'" said Deng Hongbo, director of the Beijing WTO center.

The center, founded in September of 2001 by the Beijing municipal government, is the city's first WTO affairs research and consulting organization.

Forbes Raring to Go in China

By Shan Jinliang

US-based finance magazine *Forbes* will establish its China representative office in Shanghai early next year and aims to print its Chinese edition soon after, marking the appearance of Chinese editions of America's top three finance magazines, the others being *Fortune* and *Business Week*.

Li Hua from the Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told *Beijing Today* that *Forbes'* Shanghai Office had been approved last month. Getting the Chinese edition off the ground might require a little more patience. The General Administration of Press and Publishing said they have not received an application from *Forbes* on its Chinese edition yet. Industry experts say it will take a long time and complex procedures to get approval for the Chinese edition. *Business Week* has to run its Chinese edition in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation and *Fortune's* Chinese edition is printed in Hong Kong.

The news was announced by Steve Forbes, president of *Forbes*, during the World Capital Forum held in Nanjing on November 19. The Shanghai office will be *Forbes'* first news bureau in China since the magazine was founded 85 years ago.

Russell Flannery, head of the Shanghai office and editor-in-chief of the Chinese edition told *Beijing Today*, "I will be the first *Forbes* staffer and the only one in China, initially."

"The opening of our China bureau and recent visits to China by our president Steve Forbes reflect our confidence in China's business outlook and our expectation that China's importance in the world economy is going to continue to grow," Flannery said.

Wal-Mart to Open First Beijing Branch Next Year

By Lily Li

US-based Wal-Mart, the world's largest chain store retailer, announced the opening of its first branch in Beijing next year at the fourth China Chainstore Industry Convention & Exhibition on Sunday.

Ned Irving, Senior Director of Marketing & Sam Club Merchandising in Wal-Mart China Co. Ltd., said the new Beijing branch will open for business by the middle of next year. It will be located in Shijingshan District, southwest Beijing.

Wal-Mart will set up its exclusive members-only Sam's Club store in this area, with a scale of 15,000 to 20,000 square meters. It'll have about 1000 parking places and sell more than 3,200 kinds of products.

Wal-Mart first entered the Chinese market in 1996 by opening its first Sam's Club store and shopping plaza in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province. So far, there are 20 Wal-Mart branches in China, seven of them in Shenzhen.

Sources from Wal-Mart China said the company has an ambitious plan to set up five branches in Beijing, three shopping plazas and two Sam's Clubs. It will involve a total investment of US\$25 million.



Leaders acclaim new HK branch. Xinhua photo

China's Insurance Giant Unveils Presence in HK

The People's Insurance Company of China (Hong Kong), Ltd. opened Wednesday, being the first overseas operation established by the People's Insurance Company of China (PICC), the largest non-life insurance company of China.

Tang Yunxiang, general manager of PICC, said at the opening ceremony that the opening of PICC (HK) reflects the intention of the mainland insurance business to develop the overseas market.

Local analysts pointed out that the establishment of PICC (HK) marks an important step of the mainland insurance companies in building an overseas business network with Hong Kong as a base since China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO). (Xinhua)

Can Shi Rise Again?

By Ema Ma

Just as prime time TV was full of adverts for Melatonio (a popular health product claimed to assist sleep), Shanghai New Giant Biotechnology Company announced this week it was selling the technology and trademark of the product to Wuxi New Giant Company for 146 million yuan.

In order to promote Melatonio, Shanghai New Giant had launched an intensive advertising offensive nationwide. In November 2001, it even spent 76 million yuan to bid for prime time advertising rights on CCTV. Sales of Melatonio had reached one billion yuan in 2000 and within the first 10 months of 2002, the sales had exceeded the annual figure for 2001. It all seemed to be going so well. So why did Shanghai New Giant sell Melatonio at this time?

All is not as it seems

If you look closely at the complicated related parties in the transaction, it all becomes clear. Wuxi New Giant Company is owned by two shareholders: Shanghai Hua Xin and Qingdao New Giant Bio. Some papers have recently suggested that these two companies are actually controlled by Shi Yuzhu, the owner of Shanghai New Giant. So it seems Melatonio has not been taken away from Shanghai New Giant after all. As one expert said, "Melatonio has just transferred from one hand of Shi to the other." The so-called "sell out" is merely an internal strategy adjustment. But why go to all this bother?

Internal adjustment?

Melatonio's bubble was dramatically burst this March when an article titled "The Truth About Melatonio" appeared. It claimed the product's claimed ability to help people sleep was imaginary.



A new problem for Shi Yuzhu

The response from Shanghai New Giant to this attack on its prime product was a wall of silence. Facing this awkward position in the middle of its mighty advertising campaign, the company decided a strategic quickstep was in order. As reported by Liu Wei, the

deputy manager of Shanghai New Giant, "A new product has been developed and will be put on the market in a short time." And in the meantime, Melatonio has gained more publicity while being spun off to a different arm of the same company.

Shi, the giant

In this whole transformation, Shi Yuzhu has come to the public eye once again. As one of the most controversial entrepreneurs in China, Shi has hit the headlines consistently since 1989 when he released the Chinese processing soft-

ware M-6401 which had sales of over 1 million yuan within four months.

Shi named his IT company "Giant", indicating his ambition to make it China's version of IBM, the well-known "Blue Giant".

1993 was a turning point for Shi. His company had earned 360 million yuan from its Chinese processing system and ranked as the second largest privately owned hi-tech company in China. Shi suddenly made the bold decision to diversify into real estate and bio-engineering. Cue disaster.

In 1994, construction began on the 70-story Giant Mansion, which was going to be the tallest building in China. The construction budget was one billion yuan. As borrowing from the bank was too lengthy a procedure at that time, Shi borrowed from private investors and put forward his own funds. This led to a liquidity crisis in 1996.

The company released a series of health products and backed them up with an advertising budget of 100 million yuan. Unfortunately, they were a disaster. Giant Group did not apply for bankruptcy, but it appeared to be merely a matter of time.

However, Shi soon re-emerged with Melatonio. At the beginning of 2001, Shi repaid all the debts due in the construction of the Giant Mansion. Of course he could have avoided repayment, had Giant Group declared bankruptcy but he decided it would be a public relations coup to simply pay back the debts on the back of mighty sales of his new product. It was a success, and the media acclaimed Shi's comeback, guaranteeing further publicity for Melatonio.

Whether he can dig himself out of this new hole remains to be seen.

Internet Business Has Wonderful Opportunities in China

China's fledgling Internet industry is stepping into a new developmental stage full of wonderful opportunities, according to Information Industry Minister Wu Jichuan.

Wu made the remark at the first China Internet Conference, which opened Monday in Shanghai.

Wu said the 16th National

Congress of the Communist Party of China, which concluded recently, emphasized China "must give priority to the development of the information industry and apply IT in all areas of economic and social development." These policies are bound to accelerate economic growth and IT application across the whole of

society, according to Wu.

He noted the development of the Internet in China has had some problems, including a certain incompatibility with traditional Chinese culture. This, said Wu, was down to a lack of Chinese language online resources, the imperfect net infrastructure in China, and, of course, mor-

al hazards.

Wu called for efforts to develop Chinese-language-based information resources, software and databanks and to improve awareness of information security.

Wu said representative Chinese classics and archives should be digitalized and the best of Chinese culture, sci-

ence and technology should be promulgated through the Internet to make it an important front for advanced culture.

Wu also said measures should be taken to produce laws and regulations concerning information security and develop anti-virus and anti-hacker technologies.

(Xinhua)

Jianlibao Stages a Comeback

By Ema Ma

November 18, 2002, Jianlibao won the tender for prime time advertising rights on CCTV with a bid of 113.7 million yuan, indicating the beginning of an ambitious new advertising campaign designed to turn round the company's flagging fortunes.

Jianlibao made its debut as a low sugar sports drink producer for the Chinese delegation at the 23rd Olympic Games in 1984. The company boomed after that, becoming the first Chinese beverage brand to enter the US market and the first soft drink made in China to be officially used by the UN. It was dubbed "the Chinese Coca-Cola" by the foreign media, as well as "Magic Water", thanks to its healthy properties. Jianlibao was the pride of the national drinks industry at that time.

However, competition in the soft drink market became more and more fierce when foreign beverage giants and other local brands emerged in China. Because of its unusually high liability ratio, a lack of effective strategy and the vague market positioning of its products, Jianlibao's market

share was gradually eroded. Sales have dropped dramatically since 1997. "Magic Water" lost its magic.

The local government - Sanshui Municipality in Guangdong Province which is Jianlibao's biggest shareholder with a 75 percent stake - decided it was time for a shake up.

It's been an open secret for a long time that this state owned share of the company would eventually be sold. But the media were rather taken aback by the final winner from dozens of well-known bidders. On January 15, 2002, Zhejiang International Trust and Investment Co, purchased the government's 75 percent stake in Jianlibao for just 338 million yuan. It was considered quite a steal at that price. The valuation report put the value of the stake at 960 million yuan (excluding the trademark, once considered to be worth six billion yuan). However, the mayor of Sanshui Municipality acclaimed the buy in as "a successful alliance between a prestigious manufacturer and a capable capitalist."

The most conspicuous char-



Sports drink gets pumped up again.

Photos by Photocome

acter in this "alliance" is undoubtedly the new president of Jianlibao, Zhang Hai, a name connected with a series of daring moves in the capital market. Though he's still only 28 years old, the investment

banker has already bought and sold companies in the IT, finance, bioengineering, telecommunications and food and beverages sectors with a combined market value of more than 10 billion yuan.

After buying into Jianlibao, the new owners launched a full-scale marketing offensive to popularize its new brand "The Fifth Season". Jianlibao has also announced a move into spirits manufacturing.

Venture Capital Continues Declining

Washington, (National Venture Capital Association) - Venture capital in the US continued its downward trend in the third quarter of 2002 with total investments of \$4.5 billion into entrepreneurial companies, a decrease of 26 percent from the prior quarter, according to the National Venture Capital Association MoneyTree Survey.

All major industries experienced declines. Software, historically the leading industry category, showed some resilience in dropping only 10 percent from the prior quarter to \$993 million and 180 deals, accounting for 22 percent of all venture capital. Telecommunications, the second largest industry category, continued to struggle, falling 32 percent to \$555 million in 67 companies. The networking category saw a comparable decline of 34 percent to \$341 million in 39 deals.

Renewed Efforts Needed to Boost Risk Capital Markets

Brussels, October 17 (EU Commission) - Venture capital investment in the EU in 2001 fell by 35 percent relative to 2000. This severe correc-

tive fall reflects primarily the continuing deflation of the earlier bubble in TMT (Telecom, Media and Technology) investment. The reduction has been especially severe in start-ups and technology investments, segments that were still relatively under-developed in the EU.

Analysts' Take:

Mark Heesen, president, National Venture Capital Association

The venture capital investment pace has slowed dramatically over the last 18 months due to continued volatility and poor performance in the public markets as well as the decline in corporate technology spending. Venture capitalists have become increasingly selective as they are faced with longer investment cycles, declines in company valuations and limited exit opportunities.

Venture capitalists have concerns regarding the front-end and back-end of the deals they are evaluating. On

the front-end, they are concerned that young companies are going to have difficulty gaining traction in terms of customers and revenues due to the decline in technology spending. On the back-end, they are concerned about sobering valuations and illiquidity. Both sets of concerns are resulting in an increasingly cautious venture community.

Frits Bolkestein, Internal Market Commissioner, EU

We need sound regulation, reliable accounts, and proper supervision to strengthen our markets and boost their attractiveness to investors.

Pedro Solbes, Commissioner for Economic Affairs, EU

Unfavorable market conditions and a lack of integration between national markets are still hampering risk capital operators in both the current and future EU market. We need a pan-European patent legal system and to keep breaking down undesirable tax barriers to pave the way for the growth of new companies and the increase of venture capital to incubate them.

Wang Ran, CEO, China eCapital Corporation

First, market conditions, both in the stock market and hi-tech industrial market, are deteriorating, which has reduced the interest and investments of venture capital investors.

Secondly, the shattering of the IT industry bubble and the decline of stock markets has reduced the size of the capital market, as well as the amount of venture capital available worldwide, which has in turn reduced venture capital investment.

Therefore, there is a vicious circle in which venture capital and hi-tech industries are hampered by and hampering each other.

China's hi-tech industries are still developing and have no way to attract serious attention from overseas investors.

Most of the limited venture investment introduced into China has gone to technology application, rather than development, sectors, the service sector, and the importing and retailing sectors for hi-tech products developed and made abroad.

US Proposes Phasing Out Tariffs

WASHINGTON, Nov. 26 (AP) - The Bush administration, searching for a way to jump-start moribund global trade negotiations, announced a bold negotiating proposal to eliminate border taxes on manufactured goods by 2015.

The US proposal would phase out border taxes on nonagricultural goods in a two-step process. From 2005, when the current Doha round of trade talks is scheduled to be completed, to 2010, all tariffs that are currently at five percent or less would be eliminated, and tariffs higher than this level would have to be lowered to no more than eight percent.

In phase two, the eight percent tariffs would be lowered in steps each year, starting in 2010 until the tariffs were eliminated by 2015.

The US will present the proposal next week to the 144-nation World Trade Organization in Geneva. (Martin Crutsinger)

Japan Stocks Up on Bank Reform Optimism

SINGAPORE, Nov. 27 (Reuters) - Japanese stocks rose on optimism about banking reform on Wednesday.

Japan's financial services minister Heizo Takenaka is expected to submit a timetable for implementing ideas outlined in an earlier reform report on speeding up bad loan disposal to the prime minister's top economic advisory panel on Friday.

The report suggests the Bank of Japan, the country's central bank, to purchase the stocks in its bad assets-strained commercial banks. (Bill Tarrant)



Prime Minister Koizumi strongly defended the reforming initiative in the Upper House budget committee deliberations in Tokyo Monday, Nov. 25, 2002.

AP Photo

WorldCom Settles Accounting Scandal

NEW YORK, Nov. 27 (AP) - WorldCom and the government have settled a civil lawsuit over the company's \$9 billion accounting scandal, leaving a judge to decide how much the bankrupt telecommunications giant will pay in fines.

The settlement with the Securities and Exchange Commission also calls for WorldCom executives to submit to ethics training and expands the duties of WorldCom's court-appointed watchdog.

US District Judge Jed Rakoff approved the settlement Tuesday, calling it "a model perhaps of what should be attempted" in cases of large-scale corporate fraud.

(Devlin Barrett)

Bertelsmann Deals Signal Shift

COLOGNE, Germany, Nov. 27 (The Hollywood Reporter) — German media group Bertelsmann AG made further strides this week in a recent effort to put its focus squarely on traditional media operations as it signed two deals — the first to acquire Clive Calder's Zomba Music Group, and the second to hand over day-to-day operations of its online music retailer CDNow to Amazon.com.

Bertelsmann paid \$2.74 billion for Zomba. The company said it will shut down the Myplay online digital music storage service on December 13.

The media house recently also decided to sell the German-language operations of its online bookstore BOL.com to domestic rival Buch.de. (Scott Roxborough)

Saab to Cut 1,300 Jobs at Home

STOCKHOLM, Sweden, Nov. 27 (AP) - Struggling car maker Saab said it plans to eliminate 1,300 jobs, or 14 percent of its overall work force, in an effort to cut costs and return to profitability.

Saab said the cuts will be made at its car operations near its headquarters in Trollhattan, 224 miles southwest of Stockholm.

The cuts are part of a larger plan that includes management changes and the streamlining of its engineering and marketing operations. Saab employs 9,200 people overall. (Karl Ritter)



Daimler/Chrysler introduced its successful model "Smart" city-coup in Hong Kong on November 27. The electric-powered car has a maximum speed of 85 mph and a \$10,000 price tag.

Xinhua /AFP Photo

Giving More Than Thanks

Famous actor Charlton Heston (L) and his grandson Jack (in front of Heston) joined hundreds of volunteers helping to serve a Thanksgiving meal for the homeless on November 27, 2002 at the Los Angeles Mission.

The US celebrated Thanksgiving on November 28.

Xinhua / Reuters Photo



Japan Opens Areas for Special Reform Drive

TOKYO, (International Herald Tribune / Asahi Shimbun) - Clearer outlines for Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's high-profile reform drive emerged as a government task force on deregulation released a list of 93 opportunities to ease or eliminate government regulation in special zones to be established nationwide.

These so-called structural reform special zones are a central element of the Koizumi government's deflation-fighting program, which won approval in the Diet last week.

Within designated areas, private-sector companies would be able to operate nursing homes for old people, for example, a restricted endeavor elsewhere. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology is planning schools in the zones that would have all classes conducted in English.

Analysts' Take:

Xu Changwen, director, Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation

Koizumi's purpose is to attract overseas investment to stimulate the country's economy and keep many Japanese enterprises from moving abroad and further weakening domestic industry.

I personally think that we cannot expect too much from a single policy like this, because Japan's economic problems cannot be solved with just one or

two initiatives.

The only to solve the problems of the Japanese economy, after 12 years of stagnation, is to restructure the company's economic structure in the context of regional cooperation. In today's world of economic globalization and trade regionalization, Japan need to move its uncompetitive industries to other countries and regions, upgrade its domestic industries, and find new technologies and fields for development.

Hu Xinxin, researcher, Institute of Japanese Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Unlike China's special economic zones, which are aimed at attracting overseas capital and technologies, Japan's "special structural reform zones" have been designed by the Koizumi government, to first find new thresholds for Japan's economic recovery and growth, and second to diversify the overcrowded economic layouts that focus on the country's several industrial blocks like the Tokyo-Osaka belt.

I personally think that in a democratic country like Japan, enforcement of these kinds of plans is a challenge, because the government can do little to support such initiatives. The government's participation in the development of the zones, especially in the construction of infrastructure, is critical. But in Japan, government spending, which is seen foremost as spending tax payers' money, is strictly supervised and monitored by legislative bodies.

The New Face of Philanthropy

"Rich men should be thankful for one inestimable boon. They have it in their power during their lives to busy themselves in organizing benefactions from which the masses of their fellows will derive lasting advantage, and thus dignify their own lives."

— Andrew Carnegie, 1889

Nov. 22 (BusinessWeek) - When industrialist Andrew Carnegie wrote those words in 1889, he believed that the rich had a moral obligation to give away their fortunes. The legendary steel tycoon asserted that all personal wealth beyond a family's needs should

be regarded as a trust fund for the benefit of the community. Further, he believed that the money should be given during the benefactor's lifetime to ensure that it accomplished the maximum good.

Since 1990, charitable donations by individuals in US have grown by half, from \$110 billion to \$164 billion in 2001. By harking back to the individualistic style of giving practiced by Carnegie, these donors are ushering in a new era of philanthropy. They are more ambitious, more strategic, more global and demand more results.

The 10 Most Generous Philanthropists

No.	Name	Background	Estimated giving(mil)	Causes	Current net wealth(bil)
1	Bill & Melinda Gates	Microsoft co-founder	\$25,600	Health, education	\$43
2	Gordon & Betty Moore	Intel co-founder	6,600	Conservation, education	3.3
3	James & Virginia Stowers	American Century founder	1,500	Biomedical research	0.575
4	Eli Broad	SunAmerica founder	1,100	Public education, arts	4.8
5	The Walton family	Family of Wal-Mart founder	1,000	Education	94
6	George Soros	Investor	2,000	Open & free societies	7
7	Michael & Susan Dell	Dell Computer founder	525	Children's health care	11.2
8	Ted Turner	CNN founder	1,400	Health, environment	2.2
9	Paul Allen	Microsoft co-founder	42	Art, culture	21
10	Donald Bren	Real Estate	410	Education, environment	4

Quiet Givers, Cheapskates, or What?

Many billionaires give a lot of money, but it may be a relatively tiny percentage of their net worth. Some say their charitable giving is anonymous and it doesn't show up in public records. Others say they plan generous donations when they die. Still others have different reasons for retaining the great bulk of their wealth. Here is a sampling:

No.	Name	Background	Response & Note	Estimated givings(mil)	Current wealth (mil)
1	Larry Ellison	Oracle founder	Says results count more than amount given	\$69	\$15.2
2	Barbara Cox Anthony	Media empire heiress	Adds just \$500,000 annually to her own foundation	40	9.5
3	Hars Fahly	Candy fortune	"Their wish is for these matters to remain private"	150	30.0
4	Sumner Redstone	Viacom founder	Says donations are anonymous	45	9.0
5	Steven Ballmer	Microsoft CEO	Makes most donations privately	38	11.9
6	Warren Buffett	Berkshire CEO	Plans to bequeath wealth to his foundation	230	36.0
7	Rupert Murdoch	News Corp. chairman	"The family does not make public how much is given"	40	5.0
8	Walton family	Wal-Mart heirs	Wants to keep 38% stake in company founded by father	1,000	94.0
9	Ty Warner	Beanie Babies founder	Gives mostly from his company's coffers	65	6.0
10	Carl Icahn	Financier	Gives some for charter-school reform and children	65	5.8

Peasants Receive Compensation for Boar Damage

By Xiao Rong

A farmer in Yanqing County finally received a compensation payout of 312 yuan from the local government Friday, for repeated destruction of his farmland by state-protected wild boars.

Lu Yongman, 62, has been trying to keep the hungry wild boars off his farmland for five years, but to no avail. His 0.4 hectare cornfield, which is bordered on three sides by mountains, is

the furthest from the village.

As reported on page one of *Beijing Today* on September 6, Lu sought compensation in late August from the township government for the losses he has been suffering. Other local sufferers have also demanded similar compensations.

"Wild boars are state-protected animals. Although they have caused me serious losses, I refuse to hurt them. The only thing I can do is seek justice from

the government," Lu said at the time.

Yanqing County has seen in recent years a proliferation of the populations of endangered, state-protected wild animals like boars, pheasants, badgers and hares. Of these, the wild boars have inflicted by far the most damage to local farmlands.

It is estimated that there are now at least 30 to 40 wild boars in the region. Between them, they are responsible for losses up to 60,000 yuan,

according to the Yanqing county forestry bureau.

A regulation for compensation payments to farmers for damage caused by wild animals was established this June, the first of its kind in the Beijing area.

Lu is one of the first among the 249 peasants in Yanqing county affected by the boars to receive payment from the fund, which totals 53,000 yuan and will be fully allocated by the end of this month.



Surgeons spent four hours removing the 40 centimeters steel bar from Hao Xuefeng's head.

Photo by Cui Hao

My Brain Hurts!

By Chen Ying

Doctors at the Beijing Military Area General Hospital removed a five-centimeter-section of steel bar from the head of Hao Xuefeng, a migrant construction worker from Handan, Hebei Province early Monday morning.

The steel bar, 40 centimeters long and three centimeters thick, was removed from the top of Hao's skull in a four-hour operation. He regained consciousness several hours later, and remained in intensive care for the following two days. His condition is now stable.

Hao is a construction worker at a building site on the southwest side of Beixinqiao, in Dongcheng District. According to a report in Tuesday's *Beijing Youth Daily*, Hao says his two colleagues quarreled when they returned to their dormitory on Sunday evening. One picked up a steel bar and threw it at the other. Hao, who was bending over to put on his shoes, was struck on the head by the tip of the bar, which pierced his skull.

Beijing Youth Daily reported on November 3 that a passerby was injured by a steel bar near the same building site while on her way to work. There is no guard net around the building, and workers frequently throw sections of steel to the ground from the scaffolding.

Man Injured in Light Rail Accident

By Lily Li

One of Beijing's new light rail trains struck a man at Wudaokou Station Friday afternoon. The man, whose name the light rail company has refused to release, is the first person to be injured on the light rail since it opened in September.

According to station employees, the man attempted to cross from one platform to the other by climbing the fence between the two tracks. As he was doing so, a train entered the station from the north. The driver hit the brakes as soon as he saw the man, but it was too late to halt the train.

Station employee Xu Jie said an arm and a leg of the victim were broken. Passengers and workers at the station took him to hospital.

The director of the information department of the light rail company, a Mr. Wang, declined to confirm that such a case happened.

"There are warning signs that clearly state 'High Voltage, Climbing Forbidden.' Besides, we have policemen on duty 24 hours patrolling for passengers' safety," he told reporters.

Building Material Crime Gang Smashed

By Lily Li

Police recently broke up a crime ring that had been stealing building materials from construction sites in Huilongguan District.

Members of the gang go to building sites, mixing in with the other construction workers, fill their pockets with steel hasps, and leave. The next day they go to another building site.

"I have stolen from more than 60 building sites," one confessed.

On November 9, police disguised as builders arrested most members of the gang. According to police involved in the operation, one gang member was carrying 66 steel hasps, which weigh one kilogram each, concealed in his clothing.

One of those caught said that because security personnel pay more attention to the big, valuable items, such as machinery, small items like steel hasps are not closely monitored, and can easily be stolen from one site and then sold to another building site at a low price.

Li Wenjian, director of the Project Department of the Beijing Urban Construction Group, says since there is no uniform model for buying building materials, the cheaper the materials are, the easier they are to sell. "The only way to prevent such a black market is to strengthen management," he said.



Photo by Zi Xiangdong



Wang Guichun and his wife Wang Guirong hope someone will come up with a good idea for putting their money back together.

Photo by Cao Boyuan

By Chen Ying

A moment of forgetfulness has cost a family in Pinggu County over 10,000 yuan, after a bag of money was inadvertently placed in a corn-grinding mill.

Wang Guichun and his wife have run a pig-gery about two years. The couple always keep a quantity of cash on hand for purchasing fodder. To safeguard it, Wang put the money in a plastic bag and hid it in a pile of corncocks.

When they turned on the mill and tipped the

cobs into the grinder last Wednesday, both forgot about the hidden cash, until the machine started spitting out very small fragments of 100 yuan bills.

The next day, Wang took his bag of minced renminbi and corn to local branches of the Agricultural Bank, the Industrial and Commercial Bank and the Rural Credit Cooperative. He got the same answer at each place — the bank could only exchange those notes that Wang could reconstruct.

The couple then enlisted the help of a team

of friends and relatives, however after two days, only two bills had been put back together.

"If each 100-yuan bill has been shredded into one hundred pieces, that's more than ten thousand irregularly shaped little pieces!" Wang said.

After the story appeared in the media, the family received several offers of assistance. Some people donated money to the family, and mounting experts from Rongbaozhai, a traditional shop in Beijing, visited Wang and gave some tips on how to efficiently sort and classify the pieces.

Artist Wins Lawsuit Against Postal Bureau

By Chen Ying

After waiting more than one year, Bai Xiu'e, a paper-cut artist from Yanchuan County, Shanxi Province, may soon receive a 240 thousand yuan compensation payout from the State Postal Bureau, which used one of Bai's paper-cuts as the main reference for its 2001 year of the snake stamp.

Bai met Li Xin, an editor from the bureau October 26, 1999 when she was holding a paper-cut exhibition at the Central Academy of Arts and Design in Beijing.

Li asked her to enter some of her patterns in a competition for the stamp design of the year of the snake. The bureau would pay her according to the print volume or a one-off

fee if her pattern was selected, otherwise, she would receive an "information" fee.

At the end of February 2000, Li selected four patterns from Bai's sixty paper-cuts. However Li later informed Bai that her artworks had been eliminated. In November of that year, Bai received a payment of 970 yuan.

To her surprise, Bai found the pattern of the year of the snake stamp issued on January 5, 2001, was very similar to one of the paper-cuts she had submitted



Bai Xiu'e's paper-cut



The year of the snake stamp

to the bureau. But according to the bureau, the artist was Hu Zhenyuan, a stamp designer at the China State Post Print Bureau. Bai was only credited for having made the first-draft paper-cut. Bai subsequently sued the bureau for breach of copyright at the Beijing First Intermediate Court on October 16 last year.

The intermediate court ruled that by accepting the 970 yuan payment, Bai had given permission to the bureau to use her paper-cut, even though there was

no contract between the two parties, and that the bureau only need pay Bai a usage fee of 4,700 yuan. Dissatisfied with this ruling, on December 3, 2001, Bai took her case to the Beijing High Court.

After comparing the stamp and Bai's paper-cut, the high court overturned the ruling of the intermediate court. The Postal Bureau could produce no evidence to support its claim that Bai had agreed to let it use her artwork, and the court ordered it to pay Bai 240 thousand yuan compensation within ten days of the judgement.

The bureau has so far failed to comply, so last week, Bai lodged an appeal with the court to enforce the ruling.

Celebrities Dig Deep to Assist Students in Need

By Shan Jinliang

An activity in which celebrities donate aid to keep children in China's western regions in school was launched Wednesday at Beijing's Jincheng Hotel.

So far more than 40 celebrities have donated personal items to the project. The activity is part of the Assisting Students in Difficulty Project, initiated by the China Foundation for Human Rights Development, and

it is aimed to raise social awareness about the problem of children leaving school early in western China.

Among the items donated are paintings and calligraphy, daily use items and valuables from celebrities in the entertainment, sports, arts and other fields. The collected items will be auctioned next March, and the money raised will be used to establish a foundation, helping children and schools in the most

poverty-stricken areas.

"The foundation will cover all the 13 western provinces," said Wu Tong, deputy secretary general of the activity's organizing committee.

On display Wednesday were some of the items already donated, including a table tennis bat used by Jan-Ove Waldner in the 2000 Sydney Olympics, and the 2001 Women's World Chess Championship cup, won in Moscow by Zhu Chen.



Photo by Cao Boyuan

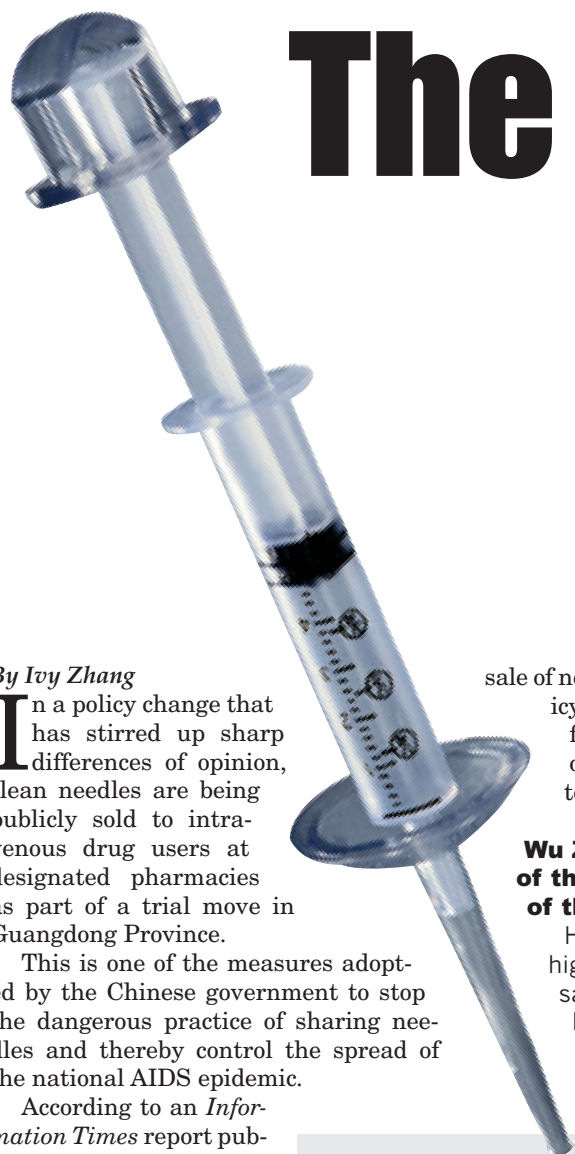
Open House at the Zoo

By Lily Li

The persimmon trees in the ostrich enclosure at Beijing Zoo attract scores of magpies, crows and sparrows every day.

No one drives them away since the zoo issued a new regulation last Friday that wild animals can enjoy the food in the zoo as well as the regular inhabitants.

They are all welcomed by the zoo, despite the extra noise they create, and the large quantities of excrement they leave behind. "These animals have been an important part of the natural environment of the zoo, we like them!" says Jiji, an animal-keeper at the zoo.



The Needles and the Damage Done

Guangdong program sells clean syringes to drug users

By Ivy Zhang

In a policy change that has stirred up sharp differences of opinion, clean needles are being publicly sold to intravenous drug users at designated pharmacies as part of a trial move in Guangdong Province.

This is one of the measures adopted by the Chinese government to stop the dangerous practice of sharing needles and thereby control the spread of the national AIDS epidemic.

According to an *Information Times* report published on November 21, a total of 1,874 people were infected with HIV in Guangdong Province from the year 2000 to 2001, about 81% of whom are believed to have contracted the disease from intravenous drug use.

That report also said that surveys have shown 53 percent of all intravenous drug users in the province share needles, partly because needles are hard to obtain.

In this trial, one town in the province has been selected as a needle retail center, where needles can be legally sold and used needles are collected and recycled, all of which is overseen by local health authorities.

Officials from the Chinese government have warned the number of people with HIV/AIDS in the country could reach 10 million by 2010.

Since the first case was detected in China in 1985, one million Chinese have been infected by HIV, according to official figures. About 70 percent of all HIV/AIDS patients in China are believed to have contracted the virus as a result of drug abuse.

While few people seem to be arguing about the seriousness of the situation, many have raised questions about the

sale of needles to drug users. Will this policy prove to be an effective measure for controlling the spread of HIV, or end up just encouraging people to take drugs? Opinions follow:

Wu Zunyou, Director of the AIDS Prevention Center of the Ministry of Health

Have you ever sped down the highway without putting on your safety belt? The reason safety belts are around is to prevent injuries in accidents, they are not meant to encourage drivers to get into accidents.

The same logic is behind promoting the use of clean needles. We are not trying to encourage drug use, but to prevent some of its dangerous effects.

This is a matter of changing the way people think. Similar needle policies have proven viable and effective abroad. What we are doing now is conducting a trial to see its effects and responses. Also, I want to make one point clear: drug taking and AIDS are not issues related to only drug users and infected people. These are problems that are directly connected to everyone.

We can say that infection through intravenous drug use is the main way AIDS is spread in China. Also, statistics show that HIV was limited to only one province in the past, but now has spread to 31 provinces.

Whether we promote the use of clean needles or not, some people are going to take drugs at any rate. By allowing the sale and encouraging the use of clean needles, drug users will recognize the risk using unclean needles poses to themselves and to others.

Moreover, clean needles can already be bought anywhere in China. You don't

have to go to designated places to get them.

So then why have we implemented a marketing and sales plan for needles?

Unlike marketing and sales in the common sense, the government is not selling clean needles but a new idea and way for drug users to protect themselves and others from AIDS. We in no way are out to make money.

In China, it is illegal to take drugs. Drug users are usually sent to drug rehabilitation centers for treatment. But, despite government efforts, generally speaking, the number of drug users has been on the rise in recent years.

The use of drugs and drug addiction is not a normal type of behavior that can be resolved or overcome through legal measures. It is a disease that needs to be addressed through sound treatment and prevention.

Web surfer, from 61.137.184.*, on 2002/11/24, 14: 57:13

Safety belts and clean needles are two completely different things. For one thing, driving is legal but taking drugs is not.

What we need to do is put drug addicts in single rooms and force them to quit, not give them clean needles. Providing needles is a violation of the law and morals that just encourages people to take drugs because they don't need to worry about getting infected with HIV.

Plus, it is not humane to provide drug addicts with the tools they need to keep taking drugs and thereby destroy their lives.

To address the spread of AIDS from intravenous drug use, we should start by destroying drug material plantations and fighting drug trafficking.

Web surfer Zuozhuan, on 2002/11/25, 11:26:33

I don't think we should be providing drug users with needles. Since they have already shown they don't really care about their health, how can we be sure they will use clean needles, even if they are openly provided? Wouldn't that basically make these efforts useless?

The officials behind this might say they are using this measure to encourage people to quit drugs, not to take drugs. To them I'd say, you are just giving addicts leeway. You are murderers,

pushing drug addicts towards death.

Web surfer Shmily82413, 2002/11/24, 15:40:21

I think it is ridiculous to provide clean needles to control the spread of AIDS. Needles can already be bought at common pharmacies, so why do drug addicts share needles? The reason is that they want to save money to buy more drugs. They know where to buy clean needles, so even if more sales outlets for needles were opened, it would be a useless gesture.

Niels Peter Arskog, Foreign Correspondent in Beijing, Icelandic/Danish

I definitely think it is a good thing to supply clean and one-time only disposable needles to drug addicts, which can help in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

It is common knowledge backed by medical science that intravenous drug users are a high-risk group for transmitting the deadly disease.

As long as we cannot effectively stop drug abuse, we must take measures to limit the damage done, and especially do anything possible to limit the spread of this deadly disease.

In my country of Denmark, we have programs to supply clean needles free of charge in places where drug addicts are known to gather. We even have rooms at certain places where drug abusers can go and use clean needles without fear of being arrested by the police, with social workers there trying to talk them out of their addictions and offering free medical assistance.

It is also important to provide special waste bins where drug addicts can safely discard of used needles so that they do not present a threat to other people. If needles are just discarded anywhere, like around places where kids might play, it could lead to inadvertent catastrophes.

In my country it is not a crime to be a drug user/abuser, but it is highly criminal to sell or distribute illegal drugs to others. Users are seen as patients that need help and care, while dealers are treated and hunted as criminals.

The initiative in Guangdong Province is a very good measure, but even more must be done to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.

SOUND BITES

"We're just starting. Our knowledge will grow with each call. I want to help people in their hearts."

— An Fengming, one of 20 mental-health staffers who will answer a 24-hour hot line run by the Beijing Suicide Research and Prevention Center, which opens next week

"It is shocking that Congress and the president accepted the wild claims made by insurance and real estate lobbyists at face value."

— J. Robert Hunter, director of the Insurance Consumer Federation of America, after US President George W Bush signed a bill Tuesday that would reimburse the insurance industry up to \$100 billion in cases of future terror attacks

"We cannot accept such an apology as sincere unless last week's trials are nullified and the two soldiers are re-tried in a Korean court."

— Kim Pan-tae, an anti-US activist, regarding the apology made by US President George W Bush through US Ambassador Thomas Hubbard for the deaths of two South Korean girls struck and killed by a US military vehicle more than five months ago. The two American soldiers involved in the incident were acquitted last week

"I have decided to withdraw from the London contest because I could not participate with a smiling face after witnessing a crisis that left hundreds dead."

— Jang Yu-kyong, the South Korean contestant in the Miss World Pageant, which was forced to relocate from Nigeria to London after a Muslim-Christian rioting

By Chen Ying

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After 38 years of marriage, Wu Yu and her husband divorced earlier this year. "I am not young. I am an old woman with white hair and wrinkles," she said, shedding a tear. "When he studied at university, I made money to support him gluing paper boxes together. When he worked, I raised the children and took care of his elderly mother. He once told me, 'I owe you too much. When I retire, I will do everything for you as compensation.'"

With the passing of time, Wu sensed there was something wrong, especially when he developed an interest in geology. "We seldom talk with each other," says the husband, "I did not understand why we had a sense of being like strangers when we stayed together."

Wu says, "I thought he wanted to tell me something. But each time I asked him, he said there was nothing." One day her husband told her that he had fallen in love with another woman, who had been waiting for him for 13 years.

After nearly one-year consideration, she asked for divorce. "Why should we still stay together if there is no love at all?"



Never Too Old

Divorce is an increasingly acceptable option for the elderly

By Su Wei/Liu Yanchen/Liu Zhen

According to the Xicheng District Court, nearly 20 percent of the 1,000 divorce cases over the past one and a half years involve people aged 60 or over, a 100 percent increase over the prior one and a half years.

Less concern with children

According to the Xicheng Court, almost all the elderly people divorcing for the first time said that their children were not a factor in their decision to divorce, especially those with higher education background.

Wei Weiming, principal of a university in Changping District, filed for divorce early this year, following his retirement.

"Now all the children have grown up and are capable of taking care of themselves. I do not worry about gossip, or accusations of failing to take a father's responsibility. It is time for me to look for my happiness."

Wei told *Beijing Today* that he is tired of his wife's garrulousness and does not want to quarrel with her any more. "I wanted to quit from the family even when the two children were so young. But I did not, for they could not grow up with no father."

Wei Jufeng, the elder daughter, recalls she seldom saw her parents sit together and talk to each other. "My father seemed so busy that he seldom came home. Even when he was at home, it was rare to hear him talk. Whenever they talked, there would be quarrels, which ended up with my father leaving home for several days."

Wei says she understands her father, but she does not support her parents getting divorced. "They spent dozens of years together. Can he really find his happiness? Would he have obtained his current social status and made those achievements without my mother's sacrifice?"

Yin Mi, vice director of

the Beijing Aged Association, says the arrival of a society characterized by longevity should coincide with longer marriages.

"They may still have 20 or 30 years to spend together. It is nothing unusual that those with unsatisfactory marriage begin to adjust their marriage models after having fulfilled their responsibility to raise children and pay attention to life quality and think about their marriage."

Differences highlighted

Liu Yuhai, 53, a retired factory head and recently divorced, says before he joined the army in the 1960s, his mother arranged his wedding with his ex-wife, but he fell in love with another girl after retiring from the army.

"I appreciate her (his ex-wife) taking care of my mother when I was in the army but the problem is that I do not love her."

Liu says upon telling his mother that he wanted to cancel the engagement and marry his loved one, "My mother knelt, and threatened that she would kill herself if I did not marry that girl (his ex-wife)."

Liu says of his ex-wife, "Though she is a full time housewife and has little education, she is not unreasonable and gets on well with my family. I know we lack something to share, especially thinking about the days we spent together."

He says with the rise in his job position, the distance between himself and his wife seemed to increase. "I wanted to buy her some new clothes and proposed taking her out to dinner, but she said I was 'wasting money' and had 'forgotten the hard days.'"

Liu says the most unbearable thing was that his ex-wife doubted his loyalty.

"She used to go through my pockets and check my mobile phone for evidence that I was having affairs with other women. She followed me when I went to work, and shouted abuse in

"Sex has long been a taboo topic of conversation in China. Old people are regarded almost as being asexual. But they are ordinary people and they need a normal emotional and marital life. The main component for their family life is still spiritual reliance, but they know such reliance comes, at least in part, from their sexual love."

— Liu Zhen, judge of Xicheng Court.

public at women to whom I talked."

Judge Liu Zhen of Xicheng Court, who handles divorce cases, says conflicts caused by old people becoming less tolerant towards their partners ranks as the primary reason for the breakdown of first marriages.

"Problems and conflicts in daily life, though once less obvious, would lead to an increase in the number of divorces among the elderly."

Yin Mi points out that getting a divorce would be a necessary step for some old people. She says for most old people, their marriages were usually arranged by their parents and matchmakers.

"Having too many non-emotional factors involved, the potential marriage problems would emerge when society is developed to a stage emphasizing true personalities."

Sexual demand matters

According to the court, the number of divorces among the elderly caused by one party being unable to meet the sexual demands of the other rose to eight this year, compared with one or two in previous years.

In a case handled by the court a few days ago, Zhang, 65, does not understand how her husband could cite sexual incompatibility as grounds for divorce, "We are both over 60. How shameful is it to tell others we still have such a life?"

Liu says in almost all those eight cases, it was the husbands who were dissatisfied sexually with their wives.

"Their wives are either physically weak or believe that sexual love only belongs to the young." She says the old people's courage to face sexual problems embodies a kind of social progress, a modern civilization.

"Sex has long been a taboo topic of conversation in China. Old people are regarded almost as being asexual. But they are ordinary people and they need a normal emotional and marital life," she says, "The main component for their family life is still spiritual reliance, but they know such reliance comes, at least in part, from sexual love."

Liu says that divorces stemming from the husband having an extra-marital relationship accounted for five percent of the total cases among the elderly. "Usually the husbands either have a higher job position and are having or had affairs with younger colleagues, or have an affair with a former lover."

Liu Guangmin of the All China Women's Federation says old people today are psychologically and physically in a trend to be younger than they used to be.

"Facing old age and a less attractive life partner, they are also witnessing an exciting and interesting social life. Fearing becoming old and yearning for the lost youth result in their becoming lost in unrealistic

dreams, acting blindly and throwing away everything relating to the person with whom they have lived for years."

Second marriages less stable

Around 60 percent of the divorces of elderly couples handled by Xicheng Court involve those in their second marriages, over 50 percent cited lacking proper understanding towards the role of their life partners as the main reason, followed by their children's opposing the second marriage, which maintains at five percent in recent years.

Ke Changjiang, 78, a retired government officer, divorced with his wife Qu Jing, a former soldier, after being married for just one year. Ke told *Beijing Today* that he was treated more as a slave than as a husband.

"Qu's health is so bad. Almost every other day she needs to be taken to hospital. I know as a husband I should take care for her. But she should not order me to do everything for her."

However Ke says that were it not for him overhearing Qu say the reason she married him was only to have someone take the place of her ex-husband, who died several years ago, he would never have filed for divorce.

Qu complains that Ke married her for her money and social influence. "He says he cannot have simple meals everyday and grudges my decisions to move out the larger room and into the smaller one my son lived in. He says, 'You can move. But if you do, everything for us is over.'"

Zhang Yuhua, 83, divorced her second husband Ma Weixiang, after five years of marriage. "We never realized that there would be any difficulty for us to live together," says Zhang.

According to Yin Mi of the Beijing Aged Association, the personalities of old people are like those of children. "They find it difficult to change and are unwilling to change themselves and their ways of life. Instead

they insist that others adjust to suit them."

According to Xicheng Court, there have also been several cases involving elderly Beijing men marrying younger women without Beijing permanent residence. "The age difference is usually 20 to 40 years. These men seem never to realize that these women's purpose in marrying them is to get their hands on their property," says Liu Zhen.

Liu Zhen says those with a happy second marriage but forced to divorce under the threat from their children would be the most to be sympathetic.

"For the old people in good economic situations, their children would be afraid that the new stepmother or stepfather would 'rob' the family property; for the old people with poor economic conditions, the children complain they have an extra burden to support."

Xu Changyou, a retired officer in a local government department in Haidian District told *Beijing Today* he was so disheartened that he had to divorce his second wife, another retired government official. Otherwise his children would have cut off all relations with him, besides dividing all the family property.

He says after raising his three children alone after his wife died over twenty years ago, he lived alone. "They went aboard. I do not know what I did wrong to marry someone that shares common interest with me and is willing to take care of me."

Xu says his children frequently told him to beware of his second wife's intention. "What is her intention? She wants me to live happily. What are their intentions? They want all the family property," says Xu, "She is so considerate. One day she told me that the reason for her to marry me is that she hopes that I could live happily. She does not want to cause any trouble between my children and I. So she left."

Photo provided by Tony Stone

Whose Fault Is It?

Case reveals grey areas in diagnosing cancer

Zhong Qun left the court shedding tears over her treatment.

Photo by Xian Yujia

By Xian Yujia / Su Wei

Ten years ago, Zhong Qun thought the operation to remove her breasts was her only hope. The operation and the ensuing chemotherapy nearly ruined her life.

Two years ago, she discovered the tumors doctors had discovered may have been benign after all. As the hospitals rushed to proclaim their innocence in the matter, Zhong Qun sought compensation.

Her case opened on November 6, 2002, at the People's Court of Chengbei District, Nanning, Guangxi, but no decision has yet been made.

Breasts removed

Zhong Qun, now 50, was a teacher at Dafeng Town Center Primary School in Shanglin County, Nanning, Guangxi.

During a school-organized physical examination in March 1992, a small lump was found in each of her breasts and she was advised to have an examination at a top level hospital.

Six months later she went to Guangxi Minzu Hospital, Nanning. After taking a pathological examination, she was told that she needed to have an operation to remove the tumors and that after that, further examination would be needed. The following afternoon, the tumors were removed for the analysis.

Two days after the operation, the analysis result came through. It said she had infiltration cancer in each side of her breast, a malignant cancer with a high death rate.

"I fainted," says Zhong. "The doctor told my husband that the most common treatment is to remove the breast. But even after the operation, life expectancy is only one or two years."

She agreed to the operation. "I knew what this meant for a woman. I was only 40 at that time. I could not bear to think about facing society, my husband and my children. I wasn't even sure if I would still be seen as a woman."

The operation involved breast removal and thorough cancer cell detection and removal from lymph nodes under her arms.

After 20 days' chemotherapy at Minzu Hospital, she left for No. 1 Affili-

ated Hospital of Guangxi Medical University as there was no radiotherapy equipment at Minzu Hospital.

Without any examination the second hospital conducted the eight-month radiotherapy and chemotherapy treatment, based on the diagnosis of Minzu Hospital, till June 1993.

Zhong was requested by the hospital to take medicine and come back for a check every six months.

Social stigma

Zhong says when she got home she couldn't bear to look at herself in the mirror.

She became so depressed she attempted to commit suicide. Each time after the radiotherapy and chemotherapy treatment she felt close to death.

"I had no strength, I fainted easily and I felt sick. The skin on my chest was burned to a dark color."

She did not dare to go out into the street to buy clothes, fearing people's reaction. "Whenever I took a bath, I could not help shedding a tear. I lost the physical character of being a woman and had menopause when I was only in my early 40s."

If she was expecting a sympathetic response from her school, Zhong was to be disappointed.

When she returned, none of her colleagues talked to her. "They all avoided seeing me." The school said she was no longer required to teach students.

"I became a worker responsible for growing and irrigating flowers instead. The school said it was out of concern for my physical condition."

Though close to despair, Zhong was moved by her husband's care and her children's understanding and she became determined to face living with cancer.

She practiced Qigong, a breathing exercise, purchased books and VCRs about treatment against cancer, and met other cancer patients to share experiences.

Benign!

Doubts about Zhong's diagnosis started to emerge two years ago.

In August 2000, after taking the routine half-year check at the No.1 Af-

"I knew what this meant for a woman. I was only 40 at that time. I could not bear to think about facing society, my husband and my children. I wasn't even sure if I would still be seen as a woman," said Zhong Qun.

iliated Hospital of Guangxi Medical University, Wang Shaofeng, director of the radiotherapy department told Zhong he was surprised she had lived so long, as patients with her condition usually cannot live for more than two or three years. Wang advised her to ask for the pathological report kept by the Minzu Hospital.

When *Beijing Today* contacted Wang, he refused to comment on the matter.

Zhong told *Beijing Today* she went to the Minzu Hospital and asked for the report based on which the cancer was diagnosed.

Zhong says that when Wei Minyi and Wan Xiaoqiang, directors of the pathology department of the No. 1 Affiliated Hospital of Guangxi Medical University studied the report on January 17, 2001, their opinion was that the tumors in her breast had been benign, with a small possibility of becoming malignant.

On that afternoon, Luo Renzi, a retired director of the department was asked by the hospital to restudy her report.

In Luo's report, he said her condition was a case of proliferation of swollen tissues in the mammary gland. Zhong says she also sent the report to Beijing Hospital, Beijing Cancer Hospital and Tianjin Cancer Hospital.

"None of their reports said it was cancer. They said it was either mam-

mary grand proliferation or papilloma, conditions which do not necessarily indicate cancer."

Ye sings a different tune. He also asked other hospitals' opinion on the original Minzu diagnosis.

"The reports we received are different to those Zhong claims she received," says Ye, "except the one from Tianjin Cancer Hospital." Among the four reports faxed by Ye to *Beijing Today*, the one from Beijing Hospital and another from the Hospital of the People's Liberation Army agree that Zhong's operation was the best way to control her cancer.

He also mentioned another report dated February 13, 2001 from Beijing Cancer Hospital. "Though it did not say it advised the treatment, the report said untypical proliferation of the kind Zhong had would most likely lead to cancer."

At Zhong's request, the People's Court of Chengbei District organized for Jingui Expert Testimony Center to analyze the Minzu hospital's diagnosis.

The Center decided that the original diagnosis had been wrong. However, Ye questioned the authority of the Center to comment on a case like this.

Beijing Today contacted the Medical Matters Department of the Ministry of Health. A spokesman called Jiao, who was unwilling to give her full name, said the court could decide whether or not the Center's judgment was valid.

But according to state regulations, the only body qualified to offer a legal opinion in a case such as this is the Academy of Medical Sciences. The court is still considering its next course of action.

Sue whom?

Zhong says Minzu hospital should be liable for having diagnosed her condition incorrectly ten years ago.

Ye claims the original diagnosis has not been proved false. In any case, he said, it is difficult to distinguish proliferation from cancer.

"There is no clear distinction between the two conditions. The former is a condition which can soon change from a benign to a malignant one."

He says Zhong should feel grateful

to the hospital. "If we had not removed her breasts, she would have died within two or three years due to transference of the cancer cells. What should we do if her children asked us to give their mother back?"

He insisted the hospital should not pay Zhong a penny in compensation.

Zhong is also suing the No.1 Affiliated Hospital of Guangxi Medical University for not conducting any further examination before the radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

"They had the opportunity to check the diagnosis made by Minzu Hospital ten years ago but they did not do so. When they found the diagnosis was wrong, it was too late."

Luo Jiefeng, director of the medical matters department of the hospital, says there is no law requiring the second hospital to conduct further examination on patients transferred from other hospitals.

"Why should we doubt Minzu Hospital's diagnosis?" says Luo. "Zhong's breasts were already removed when she came to our hospital. Why should we bother to have any further examination?"

He says he does not understand why Zhong is suing them. "It is our doctor that told her to recheck the report and we ourselves invited experts to study it."

Gray areas exposed

Sun Yuntian, director of the Institute of Oncology, Cancer Hospital, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, says that although the initial pathological examination is regarded as "the Gold Standard", the most authoritative diagnosis, there are many grey areas in diagnosing cancer.

"For cancer, there is a transferal period from benign to malign which makes definitive diagnosis extremely hard — an area which has long been accepted by people engaged in medicine but that is less accepted by the public."

Gong Xi, Chairman of the Oncology Association of the academy says early diagnosis and treatment would benefit the patients if they were more willing to come forward. "But it needs society's support."

Opening Up Indie Cinema



Fanhall Studio is a new outlet for films by young Chinese directors. New films are shown and discussed every week.

By Zhao Pu

“Sorry, I didn’t enjoy your movie. It’s got a stodgy script and too many obvious stylistic devices. I remember another young director Jia Zhangke once said the reason he made movies was to satisfy his creative impulses. I believe his movies are genuine, like a kind of diary; but yours is more contrived.” Director Li Hong may have been a little taken aback by this blunt summary of her movie *Black and White*, which had just been shown at Talk with Directors, a weekly activity organized by a new club for Beijing film fans.

“A composition with an assigned topic, actually,” responded the young director. “I agree with Jia Zhangke, but as a professional director, I don’t enjoy 100 percent freedom as he does. I have to make some concessions. You have to compromise, it’s not a matter of distinctly black or white.”

“The talks are always pretty direct,” smiles Zhu Rikun, owner of Fanhall Studio which holds the weekly talk with domestic movie directors. This kind of free discussion is what he encourages at Fanhall club activities.

The studio

Since opening early this year, Fanhall Studio has been trying to promote communication between young domestic movie directors and their audience in Beijing. In the past eight months, they’ve introduced over 30 directors and their films to the public.

The club rents screens in various places, such as the National Library, Beijing Normal University and Wangfujing Bookstore, and then holds a question and answer session with the director and cast afterwards. The club has growing influence in the industry and among movie fans, especially in colleges. “Most of our members are college students, but we want to expand and attract other people,” says Zhu.

Most people imagine there must be a powerful team behind the club. Actually, there are just four young people in this studio. All of them have graduated from university in the last three years.

Zhu is the founder of the studio. He graduated from Beijing University in 2000. His present role is director, supervising management and future development. His three colleagues are responsible for public relations, administration

and finance.

The idea of such a studio came from Zhu’s own love for movies, which formed in his years in university. Zhu’s hometown was Huizhou in Guangdong Province. He came to Beijing in 1996 and entered Beijing University to study currency and banking.

“Freshmen in our university spent their first year at a branch campus in Changping County,” says Zhu. It’s a tranquil and idyllic place near the Ming Tombs. “The most popular pastime was watching movies.” He attended several courses related to movies and music at university. Since then Zhu has been collecting various movies. He now has over a thousand VCDs and DVDs at home.

The club got off to a good start this April. The debut was Wang Xiaoshuai’s movie *Beijing Bicycle*. “I don’t know any of these directors, I just call them up,” says Zhu. He got Wang’s mobile phone number from a friend and invited him to the club’s first activity. “He accepted with no hesitation,” Zhu smiles. He says he finds most of the young directors easy-going and polite.

It seems there’s a thirst for this kind of club as more than a hundred viewers came to their first activity.

A wider choice

A lot of the young directors have expressed their thanks to Fanhall Studio for giving them

this outlet. A lot of the movies shown at the club are “underground”, never shown on TV, in cinemas, and not available in VCD shops, such as *Platform* and *Unknown Pleasure* by Jia Zhangke, *Seafood* by Zhu Wen, *Yesterday* by Zhang Yang and *Postman* by He Jianjun. The screenings at the Talk with Directors are often the premiere of their movies.

“They often say that they create the movies not for themselves; they hope their works can be seen by the public. That’s the task we are fulfilling now—bringing their movies, simple or controversial, to the audience,” says Zhu.

In the talks with the directors, the audience learn the stories behind their lens. “Some of the stories are really interesting. Many of the movies we’ve shown are created under difficult circumstances and on a shoestring budget. It shows how committed the directors are,” says Zhu.

The club members are equally dedicated to watching and discussing movies it seems. “Your questions and comments make me feel I’m in a class at the Beijing Film Academy,” said

director Li Hong at the last activity.

“Sometimes a good movie can inspire a deep sympathy among the audience,” says Zhu. Last month they arranged an introduction for Ma Xiaoying’s new production *The One Who Holds Me Dearest in the World Has Gone*. A number of viewers expressed their feelings after seeing the movie. “The movie makes me feel so regretful that I’ve been rude and resistant to my parents,” said a young girl.

At present, Zhu is negotiating with several cinemas. He hopes to move their weekly activities into cinemas to accommodate a larger audience. “Cinemas have always been occupied by commercial movies. There should be more choices for the audience, including artistic and cutting-edge movies made by domestic directors,” says Zhu. “In my point of view, movies are a kind of commodity. Consumers should be free to judge and choose their preferences.”

The next project on the slate for the club is Beijing International Film Week, co-organized by Fanhall Studio and Berlin Film Festival, which will be staged next month. 50 award-winning films from Germany, Japan and China will be shown during the festival.

Bold entrepreneur

Prior to Fanhall Studio, Zhu had run a software company and two VCD shops after his graduation in 2000. Though his previous businesses were

unsuccessful, he’s never become depressed. “I’m following my own path, that’s enough,” he says.

Zhu started to build his first business when he was still in university. “Several years ago when I was a junior in college, there was a surge of interest in the Internet,” says Zhu. In this period, many young people set up their own online businesses. Zhu established a movie sale and renting shop online with several of his schoolmates.

They had no investors so they had to do part-time jobs to earn enough money to fund the online shop. Most of their clients were fellow students. The shop closed after their graduation. “We didn’t make any profit, it was hard to break even,” smiles Zhu.

He says the time running the online shop was the most memorable period in his past life in Beijing. He remembers both the hardship and the fun of it. “One of my friends used to take several hours’ by bus to get to the small office we rented in Haidian,” he says.

After graduation he faced a career choice. “My parents wanted me to choose a stable job like working in a bank,” says Zhu. “But the Internet was the main thing for me at that time, so I entered a website company and worked as a translator.”

He stayed in that company for several months and then left and started his own business. In 2001, Zhu opened a software company with several friends. “I was the general manager,” he laughs. It was a small scale outfit, providing e-solutions and software systems to small companies. They were confident in the future of the software market but soon they found the reality was rather cruel. “Sometimes we had no money to pay our monthly salaries.” Eventually the company collapsed.

At the end of last year, Zhu opened two VCD shops, one in Tsinghua University in Beijing, and one in Guangzhou. Unlike other shops, most of the VCDs were art house movies. This time he lost money. But his passion for the movie industry remained, and in April this year, he set up Fanhall Studio.

“I’m optimistic for the future. The best thing I can do is go carefully, step by step, ensuring there is no big mistake in each procedure,” says Zhu.

Zhu says the future of the studio is a culture promotion company. At present, they mainly focus on movies but would like to involve themselves in music at some stage.



Chatting with Liu Hao (right), director of award-winning movie *Chen Mo* & Mei Ting



An avid audience gathers for a weekly activity.

Photos by Zhang Jian

Journeys to Peace and Cooperation

Exhibition commemorating the 30th anniversary of Richard Nixon's historic visit to China

By Iris Miao
Thirty years ago, on 21 February 1972, US President Richard Nixon walked down the steps of his plane, stretched out his hand even before setting foot on Chinese soil, to grasp the hand of Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai. The historic moment, a famous image frozen in time, became a landmark in the history of Sino-US relations.

The photo of that handshake, along with over 200 artifacts, including pictures, handwritten notes, clothes, gifts and formerly classified government documents, are currently on display at the National Museum of Chinese History in commemoration of the historic visit. The exhibition, named *Journeys to Peace and Cooperation*, is being jointly staged by the Ministry of Culture and State Administration of Cultural Heritage of China and the Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace Foundation.

That handshake of 30 years ago forever changed the power structure of the world. On the rostrum of the exhibition hall stands a huge statue of Nixon, reproducing the moment, and on either side, a red gate inlaid with yellow bronze nails symbolizes China's opening to the world.

From the center of the exhibition hall stretches an arched passageway, inlaid with pigeons, representing a time tunnel, with pictures of key moments in Sino-US relations over the past thirty years.

Beginning with Premier Zhou Enlai's meeting with former US



The famous handshake

Photo provided by China International Exhibition Agency

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, followed by Chairman Mao Zedong's meeting with Richard Nixon in Mao's study, to Deng Xiaoping with George Bush Senior at the Great Wall, and Jiang Zemin's meetings with Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. Among the pictures of the formal meetings, there are lighter moments, such as Pat Nixon in a kitchen learning from the chef how to make Chinese desserts, and their daughter Julie Nixon Eisenhower, playing table tennis with Chinese champions.

The scene of the welcoming banquet Premier Zhou Enlai

hosted for the Nixon's has been recreated, the table filled with oranges is the original one used that night, as are the chairs and the tableware. Everything looks a little shabby now, especially the leather upholstery of the chairs, yet they are witnesses to one of the most important moments of the Sino-US bilateral relationship.

Besides the many valuable artifacts, one highlight of the exhibition is the film footage shot during the 1972 trip, which has never before been screened publicly.

Both sides have made a doc-

umentary for the commemorative event, based on the 18 hours of footage taken at the time. Julie Nixon Eisenhower narrates one; the other, produced by China, not only centers on Nixon's visit, but also reviews subsequent state visits made by Chinese and American leaders to each other's country in the following years.

The exhibition, sponsored by Reader's Digest Foundation and presented by China International Exhibition Agency, ends tomorrow (November 30), after which it will move to Shanghai, from December 11 to 17, and the United States next January.

By Sun Yan

There were several surprise discoveries made during the renovation of Yunju Temple. Following the unearthing in July of seven 15th century volumes of Buddhist teachings written in blood, another book of teachings written in both Chinese and Tibetan was found on November 15.

The seven-volume Huayan Buddhist Teachings were exhibited in Yunju Temple, at Fangshan Dis-

Written in Blood

trict, last month. What makes these volumes especially unusual is that they are written in blood, rather than the more common ink.

Together with another three volumes found in the 1980s, they are part of a set that is the work of a Ming Dynasty monk named Zu Hui. Though some 400 years old, the writing is still legible.



Photo provided by Yunju Temple

As a way of showing respect for the Buddha, the monks copied out the lessons using blood collected by pricking their tongues every morning.

There are believed to have been 80 volumes of teachings written in this manner. The found volumes are all well preserved and will be displayed publicly next year at the temple during the Spring Festival, Labor Day, and National Day holidays.



Detail of Ode to Yanshan, China Sungari

Winter is Autumn Auction Season

By Iris Miao

Although autumn is just a memory for anyone who has set foot outdoors in the past week or so, five local auction houses are busily gearing up for the second round of autumn auctions. Previews start from December 3, and next weekend, China Sungari, Beijing Hanhai, Pioneeragon, Zhonghongxin, and Rongbao auctions will all be vying for bidders.

In five special auctions, Hanhai is presenting 1,800 artifacts with a total estimated price of over 80 million yuan. Among these, the porcelain, jade and miscellaneous artworks section alone has over 500 lots, the largest in quantity in the nine-year operating of the company.

One of the most important and valuable lots is a blue and white Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368) jar with interlacing sprays of peonies. It fetched 300,000 pounds when Christie's, London put it up for sale in 1997. Yuan Dynasty blue and white porcelain is exceptionally rare, and legends and mystery surround the few surviving pieces, estimated by some to number only 300 or so.

The most eye-catching lot in China Sungari, is without doubt a calligraphy work titled *Ode to Yanshan*, by Mi Fu (1051-1107), one of the Four Masters of the Song Dynasty. Since the lot was bought by a Canadian from Japan and made its debut preview at Sungari this spring, the whereabouts of its new home has been a topic of hot debate for individual collectors and museums at home and abroad for several months.

According to Sungari, several overseas museums have expressed interest in acquiring the piece, with offers ranging as high as 50 million yuan. However, the catalog issued two weeks ago has put a stop to

the speculation. It states that this exceptional and precious work will only be available for purchase by domestic museums appointed by the State Cultural Bureau. The sale price is rumored to be around 30 million yuan. In any case, it is clear that *Ode to Yanshan* will surpass the 25.3 million yuan record set at China Guardian's spring auction for *Bird Sketch* by Song Dynasty Emperor Huizong.

As for its ancient paintings and calligraphy, there are 219 pieces from the Song to the Qing dynasties, among which eight are recorded in the *Imperial Collection of Paintings and Calligraphy*, compiled during the reign of Emperor Qianlong and Jiaqing.



The Yuan Dynasty blue and white jar, Hanhai Auctions

China Sungari

Venue: Capital Hotel
Preview: December 3-5
Auction: December 6-7

Hanhai Auctions

Venue: Jingguang Center
Preview: December 4-6
Auction: December 7-9

Rongbao Auctions

Venue: Hunlun Hotel
Preview: December 5-7
Auction: December 8-9

Pioneeragon Auctions

Venue: 2F, Ballroom, Swissôtel
Preview: December 5-7
Auction: December 8-9

Zhonghongxin Auctions

Venue: 3F, Ballroom, Asia Hotel
Preview: December 7-9
Auction: December 10

Behind the Palace Doors

By Yu Shanshan

The decisive moment in Jiang Guofang's career was his first visit to the Forbidden City in late autumn of 1974, the year he began studying oil painting at Beijing's Central Academy of Fine Arts. The imposing entrance to the place made such a strong impression, Jiang was unable to put it out of his mind for the next sixteen years, until he started his Forbidden City series in 1991.

Soka Art Center today launches a retrospective of this series, featuring works from 1991 to 2001.

According to Jiang, he has an excellent eye for important details, as well as the strength to explore them deeply, which is what differentiates himself from the many others who also choose the Forbidden City as their subject.

A case in point is his special interest in the palace doors. He lifts images that other artists might simply render, literally and beautifully, as part of the building. However realistic they are in Jiang's works, they also work as a metaphor for his views on Chinese political history and culture.

In 1991's *Palace Entrance*, for instance, a child emperor stands in front of a row of heavy palace doors, hesitating to enter. According to Jiang, the door represents the burden of history, the struggles of power and love in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, as well as the eternal uncertainty and the destiny of the ruling class that has been passed on to the boy.

Influenced by Rembrandt, Ingres and especially van Eyck, and inspired by his experience as a teacher in the design department of the Central Academy of Drama, Jiang describes himself as being "intoxicated with the deeply mysterious and dramatic intensity of painting."

"The Forbidden City is a price-

less treasure you can keep taking from. It's especially critical for me, since it provides credit to my realistic paintings."

When he started work on the series, Jiang was living behind Shichahai. He went to the Forbidden City twice or more per week to sketch, accumulating scores of ideas.

"I found that the Forbidden City has three colors," Jiang says of his series, "Gold, red and black — the superficial golden and noble things are supported by the underwriting of red power and black rules and schemes." The gold of the Forbidden City is supported by the black and red, according to Jiang. The gold is the outside and the black and red the inside.

The structure of his compositions are always explicit, but at the same time, often abstract and conflicting. In 1994's *Son of Heaven*, a boy wearing ordinary household clothes sits on the emperor's throne, in a beautifully ironic comment on the ancient hereditary system. These little emperors, along with royal women, are regular motifs in the Forbidden City paintings.

Women wearing qipao were for many years another favorite subject. These women, living deep within the palace, who often bore somewhat sad expressions in his early works, exude warmth and peace in the more recent works. "That's the ideal women in my mind," Jiang says.

Those explicit faces in his Forbidden City paintings, Jiang emphasizes, do not refer to particular emperors or princess, such as in western portraits of royalty, but to the whole class, the whole history.

Where: Soka Art Center, north end of Silk East Street, Chaoyang District, Beijing

When: till December 10



Palace Entrance 1991

New Rockers Keep One Eye on the Balance Sheet

By Yu Shanshan

Twenty-four year old Guo Yang and the rest of *The Flowers* have recently been busy recording their third album since their 1998 self-titled debut. As well as time spent in the studio, the group has a relatively tight touring schedule, with at least four gigs a month. "The more the better," Guo says.

"Commercial success" is a phrase not often heard in the same utterance as "Chinese rock 'n' roll band," but *The Flowers* are a rare exception. In this increasingly market-driven society, both old and new Chinese rock bands are under pressure to perform, not just on stage, but also on the balance sheet.

The times they are a-changing

Some acts may be nostalgic for a time when fans unquestioningly accepted their observations about society, comprehensible or otherwise. But others, who see "business" as the key word in the phrase "music business," have arguably betrayed godfather of Chinese rock and roll Cui Jian, who famously declared that it does not matter if no one understands his music.

At the forefront of this new "rock 'n' roll with profit-making characteristics," is *Ling Dian* (*Zero Degrees*). While young rockers vie for the chance to be heard, *Ling Dian* have moved away from their heavy metal roots, taking on a softer, lyrical tone, which as their record-breaking eighty performances last year attest, has proven popular with the fans.

Wang Feng, former lead singer of *43 Baojia Jie*, has followed *Ling Dian's* example. His fourth album, *Love is a happy bullet*, features several romantic love songs, a major departure from his 'angry young man' image. "Well, I can also continue to scream my alienation, frustration and loneliness," Wang said in a recent interview, "But let's be realistic: there are a lot worse things to worry about."

Money talks ...

Underground rock bands typically have no production companies behind them; they put up a substantial portion of a show's budget themselves or raise money from like-minded enthusiasts. Such bands



The Flowers

come and go quickly. Those that last, tend to have big companies with deep pockets behind them.

For bands like *The Flowers* and *Dada*, the rise to fame has been helped along by various commercial activities their record company arranged for them, such as signing on as ambassadors for M&M Chocolate. Meanwhile *Guowei* (*fruity*) VC and *Qian Shui Shen Tong* (*Diving Child Prodigy*) are two of a handful of promising young groups who for years have languished on the fringe without a recording contract.

A long way to the top

Riches can flow to those bands that embrace more popular genres, but there are risks involved. Like all rock bands, *Dada* has suffered their share of disappointments on the road to stardom.

Their recipe for success includes freely cloning foreign music influences, a refreshing lack of cynicism and Korean clothes and hairstyles. Their second album is clearly a move towards a more pop style.

"Rock and roll is more about attitude, not merely craziness and noise," says Wang Feng. "I used to write the angriest of songs, but now my favorite rock and roll is that which ordinary people can listen and relate to."

The Flowers are not bad boys in their parents' eyes, particularly now that they are generating a significant income. As their music is heard more and more over the airwaves, the rock landscape is beginning to change around them. Unlike their predecessors who saw themselves as warriors, today's rock bands would rather be described as "winners."

Contemporary Japanese Print Show

By Wang Chunzhu

The quiet courtyards of Guozijian, the old imperial college, provide a contemplative backdrop for the Exhibition of Contemporary Japanese Prints, which opened in the west wing last Friday.

The exhibition features 75 works by 46 artists, all from the Japan Foundation collection. The works, which range from the

1950s to the present, provide a comprehensive overview of the art form in postwar Japan.

Zhang Lei and Zhao Jiuqi, two visitors to Guozijian, entered the exhibition hall tentatively. "We didn't know there was an exhibition here," they told *Beijing Today*. What interested them most was a print titled *Big Tree in Early Spring*, by Joichi Hoshi. "It reminds us

of the tree outside," Zhang said with a smile.

For art student Li Qi and her three classmates, the print has a much deeper significance than its similarity with the Chinese white poplar outside. Students of the print department of the Central Academy of Fine Arts, the four were arguing about whether the print was originally carved on a piece

of brass or on wood. They were fascinated by the skills of the Japanese masters.

On being asked whether an emphasis on technique would detract from the expressive force of the print, the answer was a definite "No!" "It is the skill of the artist that makes the print unique," said Li.

Where: Guozijian, Guozijian
When: till December 1

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Pushing Back The Darkness



Photo by Cui Jun

In Praise of the Antelope

By Wang Chunzhu

The Tibetan antelope, a rare animal threatened with extinction, is not perhaps the most obvious inspiration for a dance performance. But the animal and its life is faithfully recreated by dance drama *Tibetan Antelope*, which ended last Saturday at Poly Theatre.

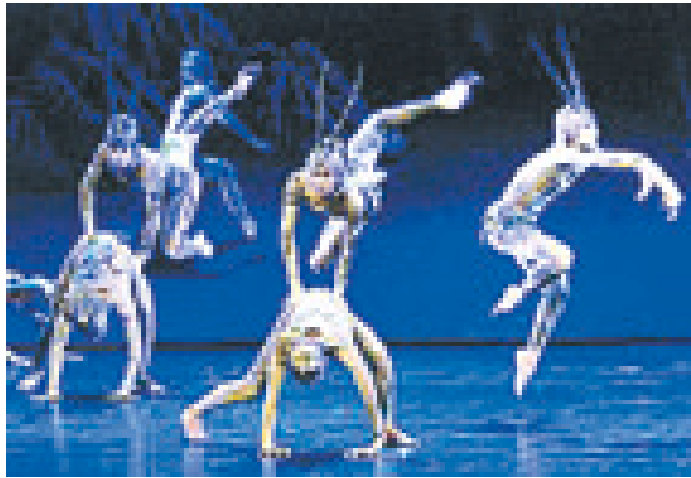
Set in the barren, mountainous landscape of Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, the 90-minute drama aimed to evoke the beauty and spirit of the animal, which is greatly revered by local people. The solo by Sun (played by Liu Zheng), the leader of the antelope group, and his duet with his wife Moon (played by Wu Jiaqi), received rousing applause from the audience.

"We put the focus on body language", said choreographers

Wang Yong and Chen Huifen. The dancers all had to bend their waists to nearly 90 degrees, and their wrists were twisted inward to imitate the front legs of the animal.

The performance of the baby Tibetan antelope proved particularly moving. In the epilogue, the power of life was highlighted when a number of baby Tibetan antelopes began to climb the mountain with their parents. Suddenly, gunshots are heard from the distance, signaling impending doom for the antelopes.

Tibetan antelopes can survive the hardships of the wild highlands, but from human beings there is no escape. *Tibetan antelope* asks people, "When will we stop killing these endangered creatures?"



A Scene from Tibetan Antelope

Photo by Cui Jun

By Yu Shanshan

At last, a break from Shakespeare and other daunting western dramatic masters. When audiences in Beijing go to the contemporary play *Three Dark Tales*, they won't need to keep moving their eyes from the actors to the subtitle screen on the side of the stage.

The performance relies on action, music, rhythm and dance rather than words. The audience can easily understand what is going on, and feel part of the performance.

Produced by young British theatre group Theatre O, established in 1997 by Joseph Alford who is also director and an actor in this play, *Three Dark Tales* is the kind of drama that makes you laugh and cry.

Distilled from the life experiences of the four performers, the play weaves three tales, *Dream of Mr Tibble*, *The Unfortunate Predicament of Amelia Sas* and *Frank's Wardrobe*. These stories are about the everyday oppressions in home and office that keep us down and wear us out. The theme is international in that the stories speak directly to everyone.

"Everyone has his or her darkness in life," said Alford at a press conference for the play. "We are not trying to deliver any particular message in our play. It's up to the audience to decide what it is about."

Alford was uncertain whether viewers in China would understand their show, but the laughter and applause during and after the first performance last Thursday should allay his anxiety. The show ends on Sunday.

A Special Treat for Harry Potter Fans

By Wang Chunzhu

Here's some wizard news for Harry Potter fans! Daniel Radcliffe, the actor who plays the young wizard, along with his co-stars Rupert Grint and Emma Watson, will come to China in December to meet fans of the book and movie series.

China Film Group Corporation has made the arrangements with Warner Bros., which produced *Harry Potter* and its sequel *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, which is set to be released in China in January. Daniel Radcliffe and his companions will visit Beijing and Shanghai a month earlier, on December 22 and 23. Warner Bros. are confident the arrival of the little



Poster of Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets

wizards and witch will spark up enthusiasm for the new movie.

Immortal Beethoven Series I

By Wang Chunzhu

The China Philharmonic Orchestra paid its respects to Ludwig Van Beethoven last Sunday at Poly Theatre with a concert named *Immortal Beethoven Series I*.

The Orchestra performed *Piano Concert No. 5 in E Flat major* and *Symphony No. 5 in C minor*, two of Beethoven's most celebrated works.

The Polish conductor Klaus Weise was invited to cooperate with the China Philharmonic Orchestra for last Sunday's show,

and the pianist was Austrian Jorg Demus.

Since it was established on May 25, 2000, the China Philharmonic Orchestra has developed rapidly into one of the largest and most promising orchestras in Asia. Continuing its 2002-2003 season, it will follow up on Sunday's performance with *Immortal Beethoven Series II* and *Immortal Beethoven Series III*, which will be held on December 6 at Poly Theatre and on December 15 at Beijing Forbidden City Concert Hall.

WORLDWIDE



Lord Richard Attenborough celebrates the 50th anniversary of The Mousetrap.

British Monarch and Mousetrap Celebrate 50 Years

Two venerable institutions on Monday celebrated 50 years of taking center stage in Britain as Queen Elizabeth went to see the classic whodunnit *The Mousetrap*.

The world's longest-running play, which ranks alongside Buckingham Palace as one of London's top tourist attractions, was first performed in the year she took to the throne. Half a century later, both marked their Golden Jubilee in style. (Reuters)



Madonna and Guy Richie arrive for the premiere of Die Another Day.

Director Explains Madonna's Bond Role

Some fans who saw the new James Bond movie *Die Another Day* may have wondered if that was really Madonna playing the character Verity.

The movie's director, Lee Tamahori, says Madonna was doing the title song and had mentioned she'd like to have a small part in the movie, just for fun.

Tamahori told her "there's this great little part." At the time he signed Madonna the character was "a little murky," but he envisioned it as a "quasi-Lesbian, dominatrix fencing instructor."

Tamahori enjoyed the cameo. "It's nice when you can just slip someone into the picture and they just appear and people go 'wasn't that Madonna?'" the director said. (AP)

21 Jump St. Leaps to Big Screen

Paramount Pictures will give big screen treatment for *21 Jump Street*, the series that

launched the career of Johnny Depp and helped establish Rupert Murdoch's then-fledgling Fox network as a youth-demo stronghold.

The film will be written by the series' co-creators, Stephen J. Cannell and Patrick Hasburgh, in a deal potentially worth seven figures if it goes into production.

The series, which ran from 1987-1990 on Fox and one subsequent season in syndication, has an easily updateable premise for a film that should have strong youth appeal. (Variety)



George Clooney heads for the theater at the premiere of Solaris.

Clooney Calls Solaris Role Tough

George Clooney said his latest role in Steven Soderbergh's *Solaris* has been his toughest acting job to date.

The film, which opens this week, is a remake of Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky's 1972 sci-fi epic. In Soderbergh's version, Clooney plays the role of a psychologist sent to investigate the mental state of the crew of a space station—and winds up having hallucinations of his dead wife who committed suicide. (AP)

TV Special Showcases Dixie Chicks

The Dixie Chicks return to the small screen in December for their first prime-time television concert in two years, entitled *An Evening with the Dixie Chicks*.

The special, which airs December 10 on NBC, will showcase music from their latest album *Home*.

The band released the stripped down, bluegrass *Home* last summer after a two-year absence, a battle with their record company and some personal changes in their lives. (AP)



The Dixie Chicks

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Classic Elegance

By Liang Hongling

Tired of furniture with hard "modern" edges, generic designs or Nordic names that defy pronunciation? Classical Chinese furniture may be the way to go, and the mahogany pieces at the Jin Wu store in the Xijiekou area are an excellent place to start.

Jin Wu's designs are based on styles from the Ming and Qing dynasties, when traditional Chinese furniture reached its zenith. Ming furniture is known for its simplicity and elegant, spare lines, while Qing dynasty is more detailed and extravagant. The pieces on display in Jin Wu, all of which are made of select mahogany, range from decorative items such as screens and fans, to functional works such as beds, tables and bookcases.

One of the standouts is a huge wardrobe covered in a relief sculpture of nine dragons and nine phoenixes, a replica of an imperial treasure preserved in the Taihe Hall in the Forbidden City. However, it doesn't take such imposing size to make a dramatic impact on a room, and even less assuming items, such as chessboards, stools and vases and can add an air of history and sophistication to any home.

Where: No.63 Xijiekou Nandajie, Xicheng District **Open:** 10 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6616 1039



Elaborate Qing imperial style wardrobe

Photos by Li Shuzhuan

Natural Vibes

By Guo Yuandan

In these days of modernization and "informationization", it can be nice to know some things that are still done in the old way. Finding clothes that have that old-fashioned, hand-made feel can be difficult, though, and requires traveling to far less charted territory than Silk Street or shopping malls. Fortunately, the Linen Workroom near the Panjiayuan market offers a wide range of hand-made linen clothes and other items brought in from distant Dali, Yunnan province. These garments are not only comfortable and soft to the touch, but also have far more character than their average name-brand competitors.

All the linen used in the clothes is the store is woven by hand in looms and hand-colored using only natural plant dyes. While the fabric may look coarse, it has a nice, cool feel and a loose, laid-back fit. Plus, linen from Yunnan is inexpensive.

At the Workroom, linen is put



Colored book cover, 180 yuan for six

to many uses, not just clothes. For example, embroidered cloth is available as fabric for upholstering furniture, an interesting way to rescue an otherwise sad chair or sofa. Hand-embroidered pieces come in a wide range of colors and patterns, at reasonable prices of 280 to 600 yuan per square meter.

To live up to the corners of couches, the store offers pillows and pillow covers that have embroidered Buddhist images. These rustic cushions range in price from 60 to 150 yuan. Smaller items include linen bookcovers, which offer a personal way to protect one's favorite tomes. Sets of six different colored covers go for 180 yuan, a great present for bookworms.

Linen is put to some more unusual uses as well, in minority-style clothing, scarves, window curtains and bedspreads. Moreover, store staff can draw up and make clothes and other pieces according to customer specifications. What all the items in the shop share is a pure, natural feel along with an unconventional style.

Where: Room 115, No.34 Building, Huawei Beili, Chaoyang (the opposite of Panjiayuan Secondhand Market) **Open:** 24 hours **Tel:** 13701319706

Style the Native Way

By Huang Lisha

Christmas and the New Year are coming, meaning the time has come to buy presents, bake cookies, and break out the evening gowns to get ready for parties. Those interested in breaking with stodgy tradition and trying a Chinese-style dress should check out Aduowei, a store on Guanghua Lu that specializes in traditional Chinese clothes.

The clothes in Aduowei can be broken into three rough categories - Chinese style-evening dresses, casual clothes and modern garments. Two standouts are beautiful evening gowns covered in hand-embroidered pink butterflies. In fact, butterflies adorn many Aduowei garments.

The store's tailors can come up with a wide range of formal and not so formal personal designs, ensuring the clothes fit well and look just as customers wish. Garments already on the racks show a clever melding of tradition and modern fashion, as evidenced by an abundance of trendy artificial fur and leather. One item that combines the two is a khaki leather bolero with a rich fur collar.



Notebooks with embroidered covers, 38-80 yuan



Embroidered shoes, 98 yuan

Aside from clothes, the store is stocked with accessories such as woolen hats, scarves, embroidered shoes, handbags and suitcases, all with an unusual Chinese feel. Another highlight is a black display table in the middle of the shop that houses around 50 outstanding pieces of jewelry. All of the jewelry was designed by an artist from Yunnan Province, who infuses her works with a strong ethnic flavor, though they are still easy to match with a wide range of clothes.

Where: Room 2010, Ritan Commercial Affairs Building, Jia 15 Guanghualu, Chaoyang District **Open:** 10 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 8561 4612

Fresh Fashion Face

By Salinda

Last month, the capital got a little more fashionable with the opening of the first Mushi boutique in the Kerry Center. The store and clothes within are designed and managed by a young French woman, Caroline Deleens, who is striving for a smooth integration of western and Chinese ideas.

The interior of the store is filled with streamlined curves and artsy mirrors that give it a contemporary feel. Footage of fashion shows is projected onto a large

screen placed near the door.

Mushi, which would be "moxi" in pinyin, literally translates to "western model." When she was starting her brand three years ago, Deleen decided this name would be perfect for her blendings of Chinese and Western styles. One particular influence on her designs is Beijing's architecture, with its ever-changing skyline and ancient hutongs forming a contrast between old and new that she has tried to reproduce in her fashions.

Mushi dresses stand out by incorporating Chinese materials, whether in silk, leather, or silver jewelry. Others have exaggeratedly wide sleeves like those of Japanese kimonos.

This week, the boutique released its new winter collection, which features an air of simple elegance. One unusual item is a silk belt with Chinese characters from a classical poem. Prices are surprisingly reasonable for boutique fashions, as even pricier items such as dresses that feature silver jewelry go for just over 2,000 yuan.

Where: Units 121 and 122B, Kerry Center, No.1 Guanghualu, Chaoyang District **Open:** 10 am - 8 pm **Tel:** 8529 9420/9425

Selections from Mushi's winter collection Modeled by Marion Dorel

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BBQ at Quanjincheng Restaurant

Photos by Zhuang Jian

Hitting the Haidian Hotspots

By Wenlong Baixingju Grand Restaurant

This three-story eatery serves home-style food including Hubei-style specialties and some trendier dishes. A special touch is the daily newspaper and jar of dried flowers on every table.

A signature dish is roast duck (*kaoya*, 38 yuan) a standout not only with its reasonable price, but also because the ducks are roasted over Chinese date wood and weigh in at a hefty average of 2.5 kilograms before cooking. Among the Hubei specialties is stewed crucian carp with ginger and scallion (*congjiang kaojiyu*), which goes for 96 yuan per kilogram.

Although already a favorite among local diners, the restaurant's management told *Beijing Today* that they were planning to continually update Baixingju's image and service level, add new dishes and improve the environs, all without raising prices one *fen*.

Add: No.1 Beitaipingzhuang Lu **Tel:** 6201 9356 **Open:** 11am - 10:30pm **Average cost:** about 45 yuan per person



Mongolian Oat Flour Restaurant (Meng-guren Youmian Meishicun)

This restaurant, opened for less than a month, is a branch of the successful restaurant of the same name on Jianguomennei Avenue. It specializes in Mongolian cuisine in a distinctly Mongolian-style environment featuring performances of Mongolian music and dance during meal times and a waitstaff outfitted in traditional garb.

As the name makes clear, oat-based foods are the house special. Because oat flour does not contain sugar, it is healthier than normal flour. Oat flour products come in a wide range, most noodle-like, that are stewed, stir-fried or boiled and served with different sauces, starting at 10 yuan. For large groups or the truly hungry, a whole 10 kilogram roast lamb (*kao ruyang*) goes for 688 yuan, while a roast full goat (*kao quanyang*), large enough to feed ten people, goes for 988 yuan. Though not as high as these massive dishes might indicate, prices are higher here than at many neighboring competitors.

Add: No.11 Mudanyuan Xili **Tel:** 6202 8998 **Open:** 11am - 2pm; 5pm - 9:30pm **Average cost:** 70 yuan per person

Shunan Renjia Restaurant

This restaurant is simply the best of the four Sichuan-style restaurants in the area. Its chef has won awards in major national cooking competitions, one of the reasons why the three-story restaurant is normally packed. The restaurant offers a self-service lunch from Monday to Friday for only ten yuan per person, one of the specials that has won it a reputation for



Stewed crucian carp with ginger and scallion (*congjiang kaojiyu*)

The stretch of restaurants along the north-south street running from Beitaipingzhuang Bridge on the Third Ring Road to the Zhixin Bridge on the Fourth Ring is a haven for intellectuals, students and corporate elite from the high-tech and university areas of Haidian District. More than 20 restaurants line the two-kilometer street, offering diners a wide variety of choices ranging from hotpot to home-style, roast duck to regional cuisines.

With an ever-growing number of restaurants and convenient transportation access highlighted by adequate parking, competition on the street is on a constant upswing. Restaurant owners face a continual struggle to come up with new items, ways to cut prices or improve quality and other draws to bring in customers, a winning situation for diners.

Beijing Today has selected five outstanding restaurants along this street to introduce, covering a spectrum from family fare to exotic Tibetan food. Outside of those listed below, the Tianwaitian Restaurant, Hannashan Barbecue Restaurant, and Hua'an Beef Hotpot Restaurant are good choices for satisfying food.

good, inexpensive food.

The dining room is classy with dark wooden chairs and tables, but not sedate. A highlight is a culinary magic trick performed at customers' tables by waitresses, pulled off each time there is an order for magic jellied bean curd (*moshu douhua*).



A waitress pours "magic" soy milk into a bowl and covers it. One minute later – voila! – jellied bean curd, food and entertainment for the bargain price of 5 yuan. Another unusual dish is sliced mandarin fish cooked without fire (*wuhuo guiyupian*, 176 yuan per kilogram), in which slices of raw fish are wrapped in aluminum foil and then cooked on a bed of heated salt until just right.

Other award-winning dishes include quick-fried Australian beef (*yuanlong aozhou niurou*, 188 yuan), and eight-treasure rice pudding in roast duck (*babao huluya*, 58 yuan).

Add: No.8A Huayuan Donglu **Tel:** 8203 8898; 8203 8998 **Open:** 11am – 1:30pm; 5pm – 1am **Average cost:** 60 yuan per person

Quanjincheng Korean Barbecue Restaurant

Quanjincheng is a famed site in Korea first known for its defensive fort and

now a popular scenic spot. Though several similar restaurants have also opened in the area, Quanjincheng, the first, remains the best.

The restaurant is currently pitching a new offer, grilled whole ox (*kao quanniu*) for 98 yuan. Don't fear, it's not a whole cow, but just a selection of the best parts. The meat extravaganza is a good deal considering grilled beef steak (*kao niupai*) alone goes for 60 yuan.

The restaurant takes up the first floor of a three-story building, and offers a 30 percent discount on bills that come in over 100 yuan.

Add: No.8 Huayuan Donglu **Tel:** 8201 5678 **Open:** 10:30am - 10:30pm **Average cost:** 50 yuan per person



Nuodijiacao Tibetan Restaurant

This newcomer, opened on October 25, claims to be the only truly authentic Tibetan restaurant in the city. That does mean the fare is heavy on yak, but it definitely is still tasty. The eatery draws a mixed crowd of students, Tibet addicts and even *lamas*.

The first floor of the restaurant is devoted to hotpot, while Tibetan cuisine is served on the second floor. To make sure their food is as authentic as possible, the restaurant's owner and manager have hired Tibetan chefs and specially ship such native specialties as yak meat and butter, Chinese caterpillar fungus, saffron crocus, lamb and qingke barley beer in from Tibet.

Dish prices range from 20 yuan 188 yuan, generally lower than the two Tibetan bars in the Sanlitun area. Among the recommended dishes are yak bone marrow soup (*maoniu gusui tang*, 48 yuan), yak meat cooked with walnuts (*hetao maoniu-rou*, 28 yuan), and boiled yak steak for finger-eating (*shouzhua maoniupai*, 88 yuan for around 300 grams). Cans of qingke barley beer go for 15 yuan each, the same price as in Lhasa.

Nightly performances of Tibetan singing and dancing are put on from 6:30 to 8pm. All customers are given one glass of qingke wine, sweet tea or buttered tea and a hada, a long white scarf that is a sign of respect and friendship.

Add: No.16 Zhixinlu **Tel:** 6234 2715 **Open:** 10:30am – 10:30pm **Average cost:** 45 yuan person



Boiled yak steak for finger-eating (*shouzhua maoniupai*)

FOOD CURE

Sugar Cane

By Wenlong

Sugar cane is a rich source of natural edible fiber and has surprisingly effective health-preserving qualities. Despite consisting of over 80 percent water, every 100 grams of sugar cane also has 15 grams of carbohydrates (mostly sugar), as well as various vitamins and calcium.

Chinese medical experts recommend sugar cane for people with excessive internal heat, since it can clear up heat in the lungs, while easing symptoms such as coughing, constipation



and indigestion. Hypoglycemia patients can benefit from drinking sugar cane juice regularly, as it can enrich their blood. People with diabetes, though, should steer clear.

Drinking a cup of sugar cane juice with a few drops of ginger juice twice daily can help treat chronic gastric diseases.

A tasty way to cure a cough is to cook small cubes of sugar cane with rice to make porridge, which should be eaten once in the morning and once at night.

Sweet and Sour

By Joel

Apparently, the secret is in the vinegar. Something is definitely behind just how delicious the Shanxi-style food is at the Qiaojia Dayuan restaurant on Nanlishi lu.

Rich, fruity vinegar is one of the famed features of Shanxi food, the other being unusual grain-based dishes. Though neither sounds particularly appealing on its own, together they are magic. One must-try is stir-fried oat noodles (*chao youmian yun*, 8 yuan), a plate of delectable, easy-to-grab noodles stir-fried in a vinegar-heavy sauce that makes for a complex dish, earthy.

Other good noodle selections are knife-cut noodles (*dao xiao mian*, 6 yuan), white noodles in a buttery-flavored sauce with hints of fennel, and sorghum noodles (*gaoliangmian guoyun*, 6 yuan), brownish noodles with a ground meat topping that taste like a deluxe version of the more common *hongshao mian*.

Shanxi vinegar also adds a special touch to the fried pork with onions (*guoyou rou*, 15 yuan), which looks standard but has a surprising sour hit, and the stewed spicy chicken (*guozai piaoxiang laziji*, 22 yuan), chunks of chicken simmered in a rich, complex sauce served in a chafing dish. Both are very highly recommended.

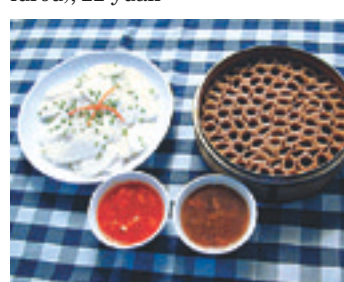
The extensive menu ranges beyond Shanxi to also offer Sichuan, Shanghai and other style dishes, though generally with not as much success as the house specials. The restaurant's bifengtang eggplant (*bifengtang qiezi*, 12 yuan) was a solid version of the Cantonese dish, with the eggplant nice and crispy, but was heavy on oil and light on garlic. The Sichuan style vegetable dish dry-fried bamboo shoot (*ganbian zhusun*, 15 yuan) was a bit more successful, tender shoots



Lotus root cooked with pig's trotters (ou ti), 15 yuan



Braised donkey meat ball (dazhai lurou), 22 yuan



Fried Chinese yam (qingchao shanyao) (left) and steamed oat roll (youmianjuan), 12 and 15 yuan

Photos by Li Shuzhuan

of bamboo stir-fried with ground meat and plenty of chilis and Sichuan peppercorns.

The décor is straight forward, nothing fancy, perhaps part of the reason why the prices of the dishes are so reasonable for their quality. Service is adequate, not outstanding, but at least they seem to know when to lay back and let diners enjoy themselves. This is an excellent place to get lots of mileage out of the old Chinese double-meaning joke, "I love to eat vinegar."

No. 4, Nanlishi Lu, Dizang'an South Street, Xicheng District

Hours: 11am-10pm Price: 30 yuan per person Tel: 6802 6642

Dining Out

By Wesley Lei

Xanadu Bar & Grill

Home of the finest and juiciest steaks in Beijing. Imported steak specials every month.

Where: Xindong Road, across from the Canadian Embassy **When:** Daily 11am-11pm, **Cost:** 100-200 yuan per person **Tel:** 6416 2272

Berena's Bistro

Inexpensive Sichuan dishes and good atmosphere keep them coming. Quench the fires with a German Erdinger beer.

Where: 6 Gongti East Road, just south of City Hotel **When:** Daily 11:30am-12pm, **Cost:** 100-200. yuan per person **Tel:** 6592 2628

Hard Rock Cafe

Classic American food and a rock n' roll band performs nightly

Where: 8 North Dongsanhuan Road, Chaoyang, When: 11:30am to 2am, 3am on weekends; Disco nightly after 10 Tel: 6590 6688 Ext. 2571

The Elephant

Solid Russian food with a variety of "salads," meat dishes and a full menu page of vodka choices.

Where: 17 Ritan North

Road, **When:** Daily 10am-12am, **Cost:** under 100 yuan per person **Tel:** 6502 4013

Afunti

Cuban cigars and live music and dance nightly. Afunti national band Xinjiang folk music, Xinjiang-style food. Table dancing.

Where: 2A Houguaibang Alley, Chaoyangmennei Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** 11am onwards **Cost:** 100 yuan per person **Tel:** 6527 2288 or 6525 1071

Asian Star

Extensive menu ranges from Indian to Thai and Southeast Asian specialties.

Where: 26 North Dongsanhuan Road **When:** Daily 11am-2:30pm, 5pm-10:30pm, **Cost:** 100-200 yuan per person **Tel:** 6582 5306

1,001 Nights

Purveyor of Middle Eastern classics like kebabs, hummous, baba ganoush, and schwarma wraps. Beverages include a wide range of fresh juices.

Where: Sanlitun East Street, opposite Zhaolong Hotel, Chaoyang **When:** Daily 11am-2am, **Cost:** under 100 yuan per person **Tel:** 6532 4050



Film Festival

With the development of film in China, China is becoming increasingly important in world film circles. But due to a lack of international exchange channels, Chinese directors have few opportunities to broaden their horizons. This week-long activity sponsored by the Central Academy of Drama aims to provide such exchange channels.

Where: The Central Academy of Drama **When:** December 1-5 **Tel:** 13701193605, 13621049533

The Central Academy of Drama

Music

Gabriel Guillen guitar tour

One of the most internationally acclaimed classical guitarists of the present day, Gabriel Guillen brings his Latin love for life and music to the stage in a festival of classical guitar music.

Where: JinFan theatre, 24 Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** November 29-30, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 50, 80, 120, 200 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7750



Andrew Young Band

Yesterday Once More, Once More

The seven-member Andrew Young Band will perform a mix of Chinese and English pop and folk songs, some of Young's very own works and of course, an obligatory nod to that band that simply refuses to die, the Carpenters.

Where: Beijing Exhibition Theatre, 135 Xizhimenwai Dajie Xicheng **When:** November 29-30, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80, 160, 280, 380, 480 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7673 ext 198

Guzheng Concert

China Music Conservatory will stage a concert to commemorate the musician Qiu Dacheng. Featuring the Tian Qing Chorus

Where: National Library Concert Hall **When:** December 1, 2:30 pm **Admission:** adults 260, 200, 150, 100, 80, 50 yuan students 20 yuan **Tel:** 6842 2047

Performance



Cheng Chunxiang(left) and Li Menglong(right)

Chunhyang

Performed by the Korean National Dance Theatre, Chunhyang is a classic Korean love story, combining traditional Korean and western musical instruments in a reinterpretation of Korean rhythms. The story tells the mythical tale of a courageous courtesan's daughter who remains faithful to her absent husband in the face of persecution.

Where: Poly Theatre **When:** November 29-30, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 50, 80, 180, 280, 380, 500 yuan **Tel:** 6592 8449, 6594 9460

Modern Dance: Report on Body

The latest offer from the Living Dance Studio examines the changing landscape of China through exploring Chinese women's changing relationships with their bodies and their perceived usage and value. This project is headed by choreographer Wen Hui and documentary artist Wu Wenguang.

Where: Beijing Seven-Color Light Childrens' Theatre, 14 Juer Hongtong, Jiadaokou, Dongcheng **When:** December 6-8, 7:30 pm **Tel:** 6424 4471

Service

Beijing Daxin Textiles now offers a 24-hour tailoring service. Daxin will provide high-quality service, professional staff, and quality materials. Quick service and reasonable prices.

Where: Daxin Yayuncun, 200 meters west of the Yanhuang Art Gallery, Chaoyang **When:** 9 am-8 pm **Tel:** 6403 2378

Exhibitions



Plain Woman by Li Xiao

The Group Exhibition

The diverse media employed by the 22 artists featured in this show reflects the artists' awareness of and interest in China's changing society. As records of their observations on daily life, the artists are exploring issues related to gender, population, and the environment, all highly relevant in our global society.

Where: Red Gate Gallery, Dongbianmen Watchtower, Chongwenmen **When:** December 4-29, 10 am-5 pm **Tel:** 6525 1005 **Fax:** 6582 4236 **Email:** redgate@eastnet.com.cn



Excellent good fortune

Forbidden City

In 1994, Schoeni Art Gallery published a collection of Jiang Guofang's paintings titled The Forbidden City. His works have been collected in America, France, Switzerland, Britain and other countries.

Where: Soka Art Center, north end of East Silk Street, Chaoyang **When:** November 29-December 10, 10 am-9 pm, (Tuesday-Sunday) **Tel:** 8561 9356 **Email:** soka@public3.bta.net.cn

"The Dreamily Heaven"

Zhao Mengge's abstract oil paintings celebrate the beauty of women.

Where: New Millennium Art Gallery, 2 North East Third Ring Road, Chaoyang **When:** November 30-December 16, 9 am-6 pm **Tel:** 8453 6193 **Email:** newgallery@sina.com

Colorful Dream

These works by Ren Fuxin are idyllic landscapes and natural pastoral scenes.

Where: Melodic Art Gallery, 14 Jianguomenwai Dajie, opposite Friendship Store, Chaoyang **When:** December 1-31, 9 am-5 pm **Tel:** 6515 8123

Cultural Exchange Exhibition

China and Japan have a long history of cultural exchange and have influenced each other in many ways, as is evident by the work on show at this exhibition by Chinese and Japanese artists.

Where: China Millennium Monument Art Museum, **When:** till December 5, 9 am-5 pm **Tel:** 6851 3322

Songzhuang Phenomenon

The first geographical concept exhibition featuring works by professional artists in Songzhuang begins. The participants are mainly residents of the area, which has become a sanctuary for contemporary Chinese artists to share their ideas.

Where: 9A Fuxing Lu, Haidian **When:** December 1-9, 9 am-5 pm **Tel:** 6857 3281

New Year Exhibition

For many years, New Art Center has been exhibiting work by outstanding contemporary Chinese artists. Through traditional Chinese painting, collage, lithographs and oil painting, artists

are exploring issues such as gender, population (family planning), and the environment.

Where: New Art Center, 136 Nanchizi Dajie, Chaoyang **When:** December 1-24, 9 am-5 pm **Email:** newartcenter@163.com **Tel:** 6528 9103

Stage

Lurking in the Shadows

San Da Baiguojing, an episode from the classic of Chinese fiction, *Journey to the West*.

The ghost of the white skeleton, who has the ability to take the form of the people she has killed, is determined to feast on the monk's flesh, which is reputed to have life-prolonging qualities.

Where: China Puppet Theatre **When:** November 30-31, 3 pm **Tel:** 6425 4798



Snow in June

Doze's Injustice

An opera about a woman named Doue who is wrongly accused and sentenced to death.

Heaven complains about the unfairness, and so orders it to snow in June.

Where: Chang'an Grand Theatre, 7 Jianguomennei Dajie, Dongchen **When:** November 30, **Tel:** 6510 1310 **Admission:** 800, 180, 100, 80, 60 yuan

Opera Joint Performance

Beijing Fenglei Opera Troupe will stage a series of famous traditional theatrical pieces.

Where: Huguang Guild Hall, 3 Hufang Lu, Xuanwu **When:** December 1-10, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 380, 200, 180, 150, 120, 100 yuan **Tel:** 6351 8284, 6352 9134

Activities

Travel and Talk

A travelogue in which photographer Jiang Yuer talks about his travel experiences in Sichuan and Yunnan and other places.

Where: Xinshecongcong Book Bar the north gate of National Library **When:** November 29, 7:30-9:30 pm **Tel:** 6846 3550, 6846 3552, 13501233717

Masked Ball

Sponsored by Netease, there will be games, give-aways and prizes for "the most beautiful lady and the gentlest cavalier." Women should wear white above the waist, and men black.

Where: MIX club, north gate of Workers' Stadium, Chaoyang **When:** November 30, 7 pm **Admission:** gentlemen 50 yuan, ladies 30 yuan **Tel:** 6561 8811 ext 399/362/447

Mystery of the Yunnan

Snub-nosed Monkey

The Yunnan snub-nosed monkey is the only primate in the world that lives above 3,000 meters, except for human beings. Ten years in the making, this documentary is the first in-depth ecological study of the species, and reveals the conflict between local people's life style and attempts to preserve this unique species.

Where: Lee's Antique Carpet, Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** November 30, 2-4:30 pm **Admission:** adults 50 yuan, students 30 yuan **Tel:** 8851 4913



Yunnan snub-nosed monkey

Sports

High School Basketball

High school basketball will begin November 29 in all three gyms at the International School, Shunyi. The winter league is open to both male and female students in grades eight to twelve.

Where: Sports Beijing, second floor Lido Country Club **When:** 6:30 pm-9:30 pm (Monday-Friday) **Tel:** 6430 1412



Playing table tennis

Playing Table Tennis

Learn the basic techniques of one of the most popular sports in China from professional coaches and partners.

Where: Peking Opera Photo Studio **When:** December 1, 4:30-7 pm **Admission:** 10 yuan **Tel:** 6510 1308

Cricket

This will be the first cricket session of the much awaited winter season. Bring towels, water, and cameras.

Where: Western Academy of Beijing, 10 Laiguangying Donglu Chaoyang **When:** November 30, 2 pm **Admission:** adults 20 yuan, students 10 yuan **Tel:** 13671038438

Vulture Rock to Dajuesi

This hike starts from Vulture Rock Park, Mentougou, following one of the pilgrim rails. Two hour hike up the mountain to a look-out by the pagoda. Half an hour more to the top. Walk along the ridge toward the fire watch-tower. Just before the fire tower descend via another pilgrim path to Dajuesi Temple.

Where: meet at 8:30 am at the Lido out side Starbucks **When:** December 1 **Cost:** adults 150 yuan, children 100 yuan **Tel:** 13701003694 **Email:** bjhikers@yahoo.co.uk

Parties

Nordic Family Christmas Party

A real Nordic Christmas buffet dinner with many Nordic specialties, such as glögg (special Swedish Christmas drink), Aquavit (Nordic erguotou), beer, wine and soft drinks. Santa Claus will make a special appearance with presents for all the children, and there will be singing, games, and entertainment for all.

Where: Radisson SAS Hotel **When:** December 6, 5-10 pm **Email:** hekla@public3.bta.net.cn



Paul Van Dyk

World Electronic Artists

In 1999, Paul van Dyk was elected "Man of the year" by Mixmag magazine and Muzik Magazine named him "Leader of the Trance Nation." His albums *Seven Ways*, *Out There and Back*, and *the Politics of Dancing* have won both critical and popular acclaim worldwide.

Where: Club Kiss, 35 Xiaoyun Lu, Chaoyang **When:** December 5, 9 pm **Admission:** 300, 100 yuan **Tel:** 8455 2361

Rock and Metal

November 29, three bands including Gaoqi, Overload and Mr Zhou. November 30, two bands started by Japanese exchange students will take the stage, along with Chinese metal act Twisted Machine.

Where: Get Lucky, 500 meters east of the south gate of University of International Business and Economics, Chaoyang **When:** November 29-30, 9 pm **Admission:** adults 30 yuan, students 20 yuan **Tel:** 6429 9109, 6420 4249

Hip-Hop Night

Free vodka shots will help shake away the icy grip of winter, while DJs Foenix, Haff and others spin a hip-hop night.

Where: Arena, opposite the south gate of Tsinghua University, Haidian **When:** November 30, 10 pm-2 am **Tel:** 6252 1374

Xinjiang Style

Filipino cover band Pink Lace along with a team of Xinjiang dancers

Where: Cappuccino Café, north end of Sanlitun North Bar Street, Chaoyang **When:** November 29-30, 8 pm **Tel:** 6417 7035

Lecture

Tibetan Buddhist Relics

A lecture on Thangkas and other religion relics from different periods, with slide presentation and some samples to compare.

Lecturer: Wang Yuegong, religious relics scholar from the Palace Museum **Where:** Luoyang Room, Second Floor, Kempinski Hotel **When:** December 1, 2-4:30 pm **Admission:** 200 yuan, coffee and English translation included.

Blue and White Porcelain

Late Ming Dynasty blue and white porcelain, with slide presentation and porcelain samples.

Members are offered discounts from 10 percent up, and various bonus activities.

Lecturer: Li Huibing, Palace Museum researcher **Where:** Luo Yang Room, 2/F, Kempinski Hotel **When:** December 1, 2-4:30 pm **Admission:** 200 yuan, including coffee and English translation **Tel:** 8451 8767 **Email:** craac@craac.org



A brushpot from the Chongzheng period

Movies

Lunar Eclipse

Director Wang Quan'an Starring Yu Nan, Wu Chao, Hu Xiaoguang. One actress plays the roles of two women. One, a beautiful, cultured intellectual living a life of idle luxury with plans to marry a rich businessman; the other, a strip-tease dancer and karaoke lounge girl at the bottom of the Beijing underworld. Both women come upon an innocent young taxi driver, who dreams of becoming a photographer.

Where: Cherry Lane Movies, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu **When:** November 29-30, 8 pm **Admission:** 40 yuan **Tel:** 6430 1398

Gattopardo

Directed by Luchino Visconti. Prince Salina, a great landowner, is forced to watch the decline of his family's power and influence after 'Il Risorgimento' the unification of Italy. The upper classes try to ignore the nationalist movements and the prince is uncertain of his own feelings. He has a balancing act to perform, for the sake of his own survival, and to position his son Paolo, his daughter Concetta, and his revolutionist nephew Tancredi as best he can, for their survival into the unknown future. In Italian with English subtitles

Where: Italian Embassy - Cultural Office, 2 Sanlitun Dong'er Jie **When:** December 5, 7 pm **Email:** italcult@public.bta.net.cn



Scene from Woman Demon Human

Woman Demon Human

Filmmaker Huang Shuqin offers an insightful exploration of emotions, identity and gender. A Chinese opera performer who goes against convention by making a career in playing male roles, especially that of Zhong Kui, a benevolent ghost who appears in several Chinese operas. Her professional success, however, is attained at the cost of a considerable struggle against an anti-female system and unhappy personal life. In Chinese with Chinese subtitles.

Where: Space for Imagination **When:** November 30, 7 pm **Admission:** 5 yuan **Tel:** 6297 1280

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By Guo Yuandan

Chinawide

A Southern Water Remedy

By Chen Jie

Translated by Zhuang Yan

As the dry, cold days of winter approach in Beijing, it's tempting to seek out warmer and more humid climes in the south of China. I chose Wuzhen (乌镇), Nanxun (南浔) and Xitang (西塘), three ancient "water towns" in Zhejiang Province which remain curiously overlooked by tourists heading in force to more famous nearby places like Luzhi (用直), Tongli (同里) and Zhouzhuang (周庄) in Jiangsu Province.

Getting off the train at Jiaxing early in the morning, I climb into a rickshaw which costs four yuan for a ride to the main local magnet for anyone who happens to be interested in the history of the CPC - the South Lake (Nan Hu) in Jiaxing, site of the first conference of the Party. I am looking for deeper history, and in the three ancient towns scattered around Jiaxing, I am ready to begin my fantasy.

Wuzhen — Town of Bridges

Wu Zhen is probably best known as the hometown of Mao Dun, a renowned writer of the 1930s. It is a 40-minute drive west of Jiaxing. The town has a history of over 2000 years, and a considerable culture of its own. Wuzhen attracts many literary aficionados, but also deserves the attention of Chinese culture and architecture lovers, like me.

The Grand Beijing-Hangzhou Canal runs through Wuzhen. "There used to be 120 stone bridges here, to connect all the rivers and brooks," an elderly local tells me. "You'd come across a bridge every 100 paces before, but not many are left now, only about 40."

The bridges that remain are magnificent, however, and all very different. Newer ones, older ones, flat ones and arched ones, each bridge is characterized with a poetic name intended to bring good luck.

Covered Bridges are common in south China. There is one in the east part of Wuzhen. Qing Yu Qiao (晴雨桥) has a parapet on both sides and a wall dividing the bridge into two parts to direct passengers heading in different directions. The roof is covered with black plain tiles. Passers-by can take a rest on its bench seats if it suddenly starts raining, a common feature of the climate in this part of the world.

Sitting on the bridge, you can take in what has to be one of the most striking river views in Wuzhen.

Water Chambers (Shui Ge 水阁) are a feature of local architecture. They are a kind of covered stone structure built above the streams and rivers in the town. I saw an elderly lady in her 70s going up to one of the chambers. "It's too dark inside today, so I moved here to do some sewing," she says, her weathered face creasing into a giant smile "I sometimes come to watch the film crews down there on the covered bridge. They say there is another group coming this afternoon." Tourists may not have discovered this place, but cinematographers clearly have. It's no wonder film crews are a common sight here. Wuzhen is an ideal place to re-create dewy scenes of ancient China.

Wuzhen is a good place to escape as there aren't so many people and no automobiles. You can mosey along by the riverside walkways paved with stone slabs, enjoying the peace and old-fashioned ambience.

For accommodation information and more about Wuzhen, check the informative English home page: <http://www.WuZhen.com.cn/WuZhen.eng/>

Drizzling Nanxun

There is no better way to capture the feel of a water town in southern China than to glide down a small river on a boat. The likelihood of an accompanying soft drizzle, as I had, adds to the atmosphere, with the overhanging trees glistening and water falling softly on water. The boatman's coat was covered with raindrops. The vegetation lining the riverbanks, like the ubiquitous green moss, makes it seem all the further from the standard urban environment.

The two best-known sights in Nanxun, which is an hour's drive northwest of Wuzhen, are Little Lotus Mansion (Xiao Lian Zhuang 小莲庄) and the next door Cang Shu Lou (藏书楼), a library building constructed in the 1920s. (Admission for both, 20 yuan)

The first owner of Little Lotus Mansion was merchant Liu Yong of the late Qing Dynasty. Built in 1855, the 5-acre mansion has a large area of exquisite gardens which attract passionate horticulturists. The 2-acre lotus

pond is a charming surprise. Lotus flowers are no longer in season at this time of year, not even in the south, but this pond is still awash with green lotus leaves. Beneath the scarlet leaves on the trees, it's a colorful scene.

At first glance, the red brick French style two-storied pavilion south of the pond seems at odds with the surrounding Chinese style. It is somewhat outlandish and about as far away from Chinese architecture as you can get. Skeptical at first, the gardener here admits she was converted once she looked down from the second floor. "It's amazing how it blends into the Chinese mood," she says, "just imagine you are a young woman in the Qing Dynasty, missing someone in a drizzly late autumn day."

The life of young women in the Qing Dynasty may have revolved around waiting, but when you see where they lived, it's sometimes hard to feel that sorry for them. Stepping into the gracious southern style garden, the off-white brick and wood structure of the library building immediately attracts my attention. The master of Cang Shu Lou was the grandson of Liu Yong. He once boasted of having 160,000 books in his library. But in the turbulence of the early Twentieth Century, he had to sell most of them to make a living. In the end he donated the whole building and its remaining books to the country in 1951. Now the building serves as the Ancient Books Library of Zhejiang Province.

I was staying at one of the many old-style inns in the town. It was a refurbished wood building. Opening the window, the grassy sweetness of the drizzle outside filled the room.

For more information about Nanxun, check <http://www.jsdj.com/luyou/lyzy/zjnanxun.htm>

Xitang Home Visit

There is no public transportation between Nanxun and Xitang, but Xitang is only an hour's drive east of Nanxun. I got there by hitchhiking. Xitang is the biggest water town in south China with a history dating from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

The whole town is enfolded in a mist when I arrive, but it soon clears up as the sun burns off the chilly humidity. A small bird sits

on the red lantern hanging from a house, wings spread, inviting more sunshine to dry its feathers. It's a pleasant morning, and the first clear day I've had since arriving in the south. I find my way towards Shao Xiang Gang (烧香港) (literally "water alley for burning incense") where local people get together to make wishes, burning joss sticks all the way along the water alley.

Most of the streets along the riverside in commercial areas are covered with thin, wooden roofs, forming a 2-2.5m wide Covered Corridor (Lang Peng). The function of this structure is obvious: to make the streets accessible all the time. Neither the merchants nor their customers, past and present, need to worry about the damp weather while conducting their business.

The water alley and bridges are similar to those in Wuzhen, but the buildings are very different. Here the houses along the riverbanks seem inaccessible with forbidding, featureless outer walls. I enter one of the narrow-door, two storied houses and am welcomed by its friendly owner Xu Yongming, a high school physics teacher, who shows me around his residence. He loves to collect bamboo carvings, I learn, and seems to take genuine pleasure in his job and life, and even appears to enjoy the presence of outsiders. Personable and incurably talkative, he tells me of his love of the water town and is proud to be a local resident.

We talk till late in the afternoon. As another beautiful sunset descends, I can understand why he's happy to live here. Wishing to come back again, I light a joss stick on my boat as it floats down Shao Xiang Gang.

Admission to Xi Tang Old Town Area: 40 yuan

For accommodation information and more about Xi Tang, check

<http://www.XiTang.com.cn/indexx.asp>

Transportation by train: Beijing Railway Station offers direct service to Hangzhou, (T31, 15:50 from BJ Railway Station, arrives at Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province at 07:30 the next morning. Price: 193 yuan). From Hangzhou, take the K121 (leaves at 7:37 and arrives at Jiaxing at 08:44. Price: 16 yuan) to Jiaxing.



Boats are a common means of transportation in south China.



A long, wet, and quiet flagstone lane in Wuzhen.



Covered bridges offer protection from the elements.



A typical residence in south China.

Photos by Chen Jie